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A BERKSHIRE WINTER

By Walter Prichard Eaton

ILLUSTRATIONS BY WALTER KING STONE

IT was the seventh of November when winter began for us in the Berkshires. The day opened dull and gray, with a damp chill in the air. The chickadees gathered in the shelter of the Norway spruces before the house, and pecked eagerly at the suet wired to a crotch. Under a leaden sky we drove northward along the road that skirts Stockbridge Bowl. The wind was keen out of the north-west and the white caps were chasing over the lake and splashing on the beach. Between us and the sources of the wind, West Stockbridge Mountain opposed its long, copper-colored battlement, copper colored with the dead foliage still shredding the hard timber. The leaden clouds were racing up over its summit. Even as we watched, there was suddenly a puff of white vapor, like smoke, enshrouding its northward point. This smoke rapidly spread along the level summit, wiping it from sight, swept down the slope, wiping out the mountain, was caught by the wind and swirled over the lake. A spit of snow, a stinging flake on eyelash or lip, and then the white vapor was upon us. We were shrouded in winter. It was as if the long range of the mountain had been our protecting battlement, invaded, captured, overrun by all the cohorts of the frost and storm.

The next day we woke into a picture-book world of sunshine and dazzling white. Every long, graceful limb of our Norway spruces was bowed with its burden, and the pines behind the house rested their white loads on the roof. As we looked from our windows, we seemed to be shut out from the world, to be dwelling in a frosted Christmas card. But the snow melted rapidly. By afternoon the roads were clear though muddy. We walked southward toward Monument Mountain, and came upon a newly ploughed field. Between each brown ridge of soil ran a furrow filled with snowy white. These beautiful parallels led over a doming ridge, like a striped carpet, to the feet of a red house tucked away amid its dark green spruces. The design was exquisite for all its ruled primness. On the mountain the snow had not melted, and High Pasture looked as if some giant had dropped his napkin there. A red sunset

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And then the white vapor was upon us. We

illumined the vista of our drive when we reached home again, and glancing across our garden, which was in heavy shadow, we saw the dun hill-side ablaze with the reflected glory, as if autumn had suddenly come again.

But there was to be no more autumn for us. The snow which had melted speedily returned and did not melt, and there followed a long season of such exquisite colors and woodland mysteries and roadside loveliness as the city dweller knows nothing of. In-

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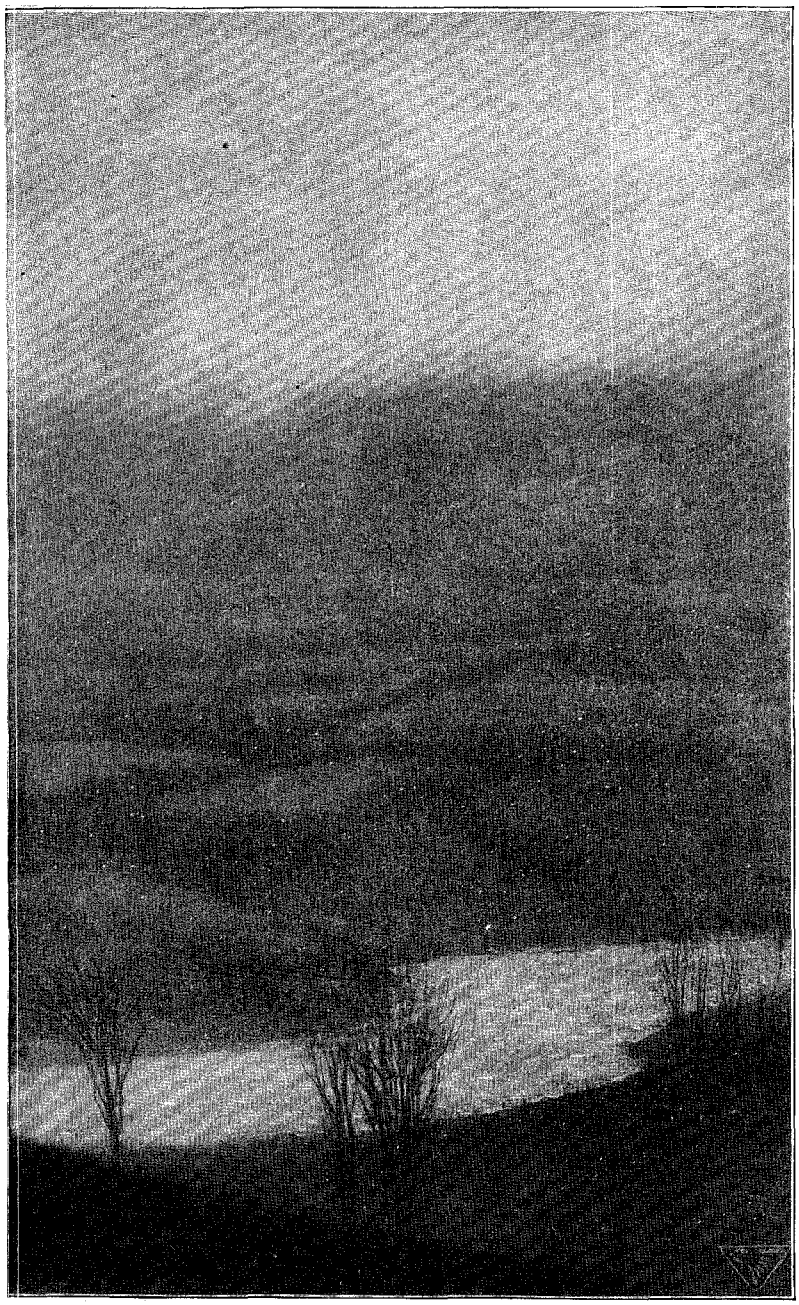

were shrouded in winter.—Page 641.

deed, the man who knows the country only in summer has but little conception of nature's most beautiful effects, and as we tramped on our snow-shoes through deserted "formal gardens" and down the lanes behind the closed and boarded-up summer estates which dot the Berkshire hill-sides, we often wondered what the owners find in town to compensate for these lost months, when autumn stains the woods and winter creeps through them with its glory of color on a key as different from summer's key as

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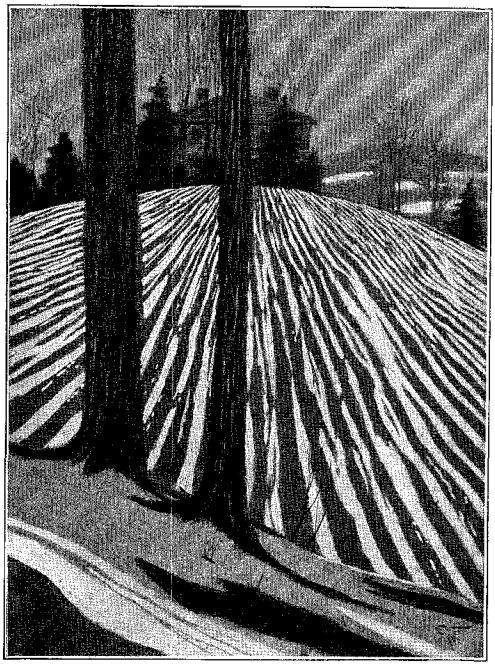


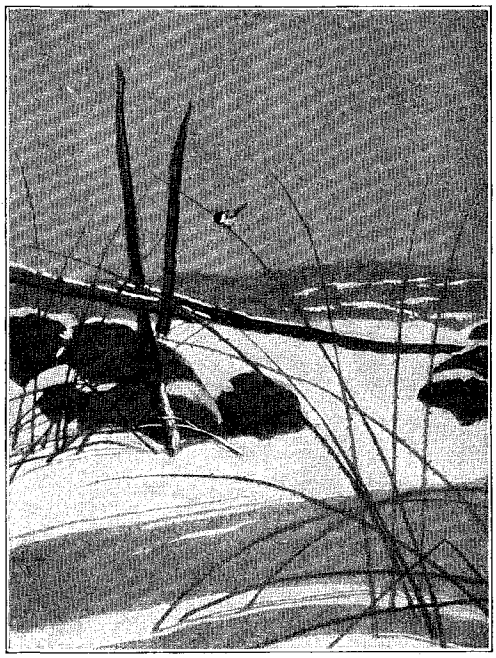
Between each brown ridge of soil ran a furrow filled with snowy white. These beautiful parallels led over a doming ridge, like a striped carpet.—Page 641.

minor from major, and then spring, resurgent, comes again, with apple blossoms in her hair. Perhaps the price of their estates is this lost vigil of the under-seasons, if winter be an under-season rather than the crown of the year! If that is so, we breathed pharisaical thanks for our poverty, as we cast one more backward glance at the deserted formal garden and the boarded mansion, and plunged into the wonder of the woods. Our house is small and humble, behind its Norway spruces, but the fire is always alight on its hearth and there is always suet for the birds.

There is a curious delusion that winter is a season without color. It is only a season with different color. Once live this season out close to mountains, forests, fields, and stretches of cultivated valley, and you may discover such lovely colors and such odd combinations as you never dreamed, and even days of absolute prismatic dazzle, reducing summer, by comparison, to a tame green velvet. Winter, to be sure, has its moods of black and white, when pictures are reduced to their simple elements of line and chiaroscuro. But even these are fascinating, as if nature were bent upon showing you that she is not dependent on her color-box for her charm.

In early winter, when the snow is yet light, you may walk up a back road through the timber and note where a wagon has turned off up a logging trail. The snow has melted in the wheel tracks, making two brown paths, where the dead leaves show through. Those tracks have all the rich irregularity of the lines in an etching. Presently you come upon a brook, following it into the woods. It runs through the white carpet, quite black, as if laid on with a free brush loaded with ink. There is ice in the back waters, and that is black too. The dark pines rise from its banks, straight, geometrical. Nature to-day is drawn, not painted, washed in with black and white.

But emerging from the woods, even on a gray day without sun, color is sure somewhere to meet your eye, though it may be only the iron-rust brown of a tamarack swamp or the tawny red of a roadside willow. These browns



It is as Japanese as anything in Japan, even to the gray chickadee perched on the topmost spray!—Page 645.

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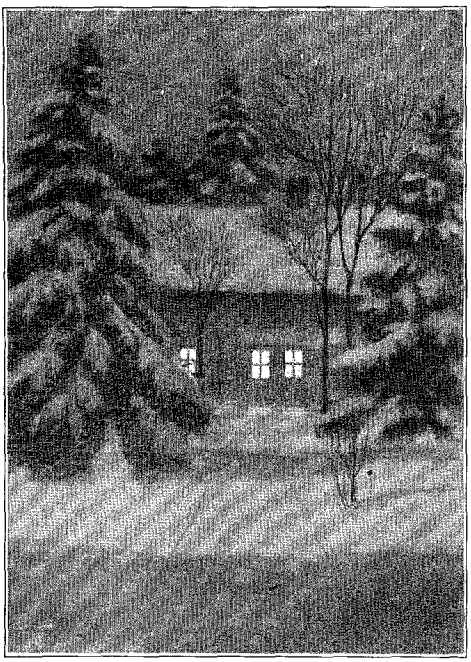
and reds of winter are exquisite in their subdued richness, and under certain conditions of light they are thrown into combinations with other colors, at once daring and beautiful. It is toward the early winter sunset that the combinations are most effectively brought about. The valley lies quiet under its mantle of snow and ringed with its lovely hills. The frozen river winds through fringing willows. Tramping southward we see the willows on Muddy Brook like a screen of fantastic tracery across a white field, isolated by snow and sky, composed and bitten sharply like an etching. Presently the far-off blue dome of Mount Everett comes into view, cleanly outlined against a pale and luminous sky tinging into green, for sunset is drawing on. The snow-feathered slopes of Beartown Mountain to the east are turning pink. Pink changes slowly to purple, to amethyst. The ring of hills that wall our valley stand up like jewels. Beyond the unbroken white of the roadside meadow the edge of the swamp wears a shadowy veil of the same color, but subdued, mysterious. Out of the swamp rise the rusty tamaracks, and lay their rich reddish-brown in delicate, smoky tufts against the amethyst hills. Only Mount Everett far to the south remains a pure, ethereal blue under the green sunset. The winter world is still. We hear our own footsteps creak on the frozen snow. Everything is cool, peaceful, and the color chord of sky and hills and rusty swamp is like the opening chord of some andante by Mozart, sad only with the wistfulness of serene and perfect things.



Every long, graceful limb of our Norway spruces was bowed with its burden.—Page 641.

But the winter colors may be gay as well. For sheer ecstasy of delicate color, what can match the lavender stalk of a blackberry vine rising out of the snow, by a half-buried stone wall, and shining in the sun? We grow enthusiastic over the pink of Japanese cherry blossoms splashed charily upon a screen. Here is subject for a screen by our New England roadside—the field of virgin white snow, the horizontal design of gray stone wall, and rising with a graceful curve the lavender stalks of the blackberry vines. It is as Japanese as anything in Japan, even to the gray chickadee perched on the topmost spray! Then there are the tawny tiger-coated willows, which sometimes rise almost like a flame against a background of evergreen or are flanked by the silvery white of the birches. In the woods, too, the green of summer persists till winter is in full command. On the southern slopes of the mountains we have come upon ferns still flaunting through the snow and partridge berry vines scratched up into sight by some hungry bird; and always the bright sun reflects the gleam of the birches and throws the evergreens into brilliant relief.

How the woods improve in winter, too, over the desolation of the formal gardens! The garden fountain is boxed up, and the sundial. The rose-bushes are packed in straw and broken pine boughs. The clipped and mathematical evergreens are pathetic in their stunted formality, as they are mercilessly cut out against the white snow and the dazzling landscape beyond. Minerva's bust on her pedestal amid the naked tree-trunks at the edge of the woods presides over the desolation, as disconsolate as the boarded fountain and the shuttered house behind.

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The man who knows the country only in summer has but little conception of nature's most beautiful effects.—Page 643.

But we point our snow-shoes up the forest path, brushing the snow from the laden boughs, and presently in a mountain clearing we come upon another garden where nature has been the sole designer, to the confusion of man.

For all we can say, the level acre of snow before us might cover roses and flower-beds. It is the dazzling foreground of the composition. Beyond it, the hill drops away, and at the rim, set as formally as you please, but trimmed only by the wind and sun, is a hemlock hedge, one tall tree in the centre flanked by green of lower growth. To left and right birches and chestnuts complete the composition, and beyond rises the steep hill-side on the one hand, drops away the valley on the other, drops to the rolling white fields, the lake, then rises again some miles away to the blue wall of a mountain. Juggle with nature as you will, plant and prune, rule and trim, somewhere in the woods and hills behind your house she will excel you, make all your work look ridiculous and mean.

Perhaps by some association of ideas formed long ago in childhood, a "white Christmas" has meant for me not so much a frosted, dazzling morning as a still, quiet evening when the red lights of a house amid evergreens shine friendly over the snow. Was it some Christmas card which caught my childish fancy, or a paragraph out of Andersen, or a sight of my own home with the evening lamps aglow, which has fixed this association in my brain? I cannot say. But when Christmas eve drew on last year the old association haunted me, and as darkness enveloped our quiet village street I stole out into the white mystery of new-fallen snow and slunk off through the garden. Reaching thus by devious backways, including the cemetery, the end of the street, I turned toward home, encountering nobody save a child, who was ecstatically staggering under a huge bundle. From the windows of each house the lamps were shining, making golden squares of warm light amid the trees and over the snow. The dim, forgotten pages of my childhood turned back in my brain. I felt, without being able to say why or when, my father's arms lifting me up, and saw through sleepy eyes a door opening a golden welcome in the night. A strange, half-remembered story of some cottage in the winter forest, where a wood-chopper lived with his children and witches were about, floated pleasantly through my consciousness. I drew near my own house. Through the

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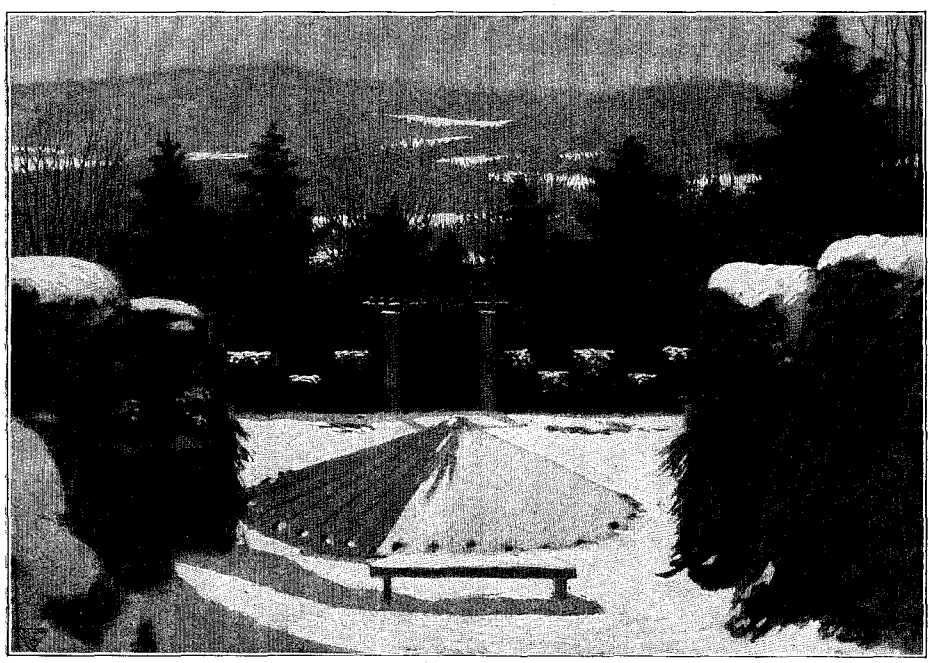
Norway spruces of the drive its window squares were gleaming. It was mine, my home! The warmth was crackling from my hearth! The welcome of my loved ones waited me! Like the veriest Sentimental Tommy, I pretended I was an exile returning. My heart was actually beating high as I opened the door. The smell of supper greeted me, the delicious warmth of wood fires. I gathered her I love hungrily to my heart, but I could not tell her why. One cannot explain such things as that, the mysterious linking with all one's emotional nature of a golden window square across the winter snow.

Neither can one fully analyze that melancholy death in life which accompanies an untimely January thaw. Some morning the south wind sets in, the glass rises higher and higher, a languid, drizzling rain comes over the mountain, and by the following afternoon the brown ridges are showing through the snow on the ploughed lands, the sloppy roads are stripped to their under layer of ice, and from all the earth rises a thick, enervating steam, so that one might be moving in a sea fog. Only the tops of the high hills stand up above this vapor, as if they were suspended in mid-air. It may be in the country we are too dependent on the weather for our moods. At such a time, at any rate, bicker raises its ugly head in many a household, and one tears up at noon, and consigns to the spluttering Franklin stove, the literary creation of a morning.

And then comes the resurrection of the frost. Forwarned by the growing chill at night, so that in the darkness we have sat up in bed and hauled added covering over us, we wake into a new world of dazzling wonder. The rain and mist have frozen on every bush and twig, on every wire and fence, on pole and limb, and even on the very sides of the houses. The trees are bowed with their load of jewels, and even the modest birches are brazen with diamonds. The world flashes like a prism in the sun; the humblest shrub in the garden is a burning bush of rainbow tints. Slipping and falling on the perilous ground, we climb hastily to the top of the nearest hill before the wonder shall melt. It is a strange, transformed universe we look down upon. Beyond the foreground the prismatic colors are lost. The upland pasture at our feet is a crystal carpet flashing with violet, indigo, green, and red, but far below



The desolation of the formal gardens! The garden fountain is boxed up. . . . The rose-bushes are packed in straw and broken pine boughs.—Page 645.

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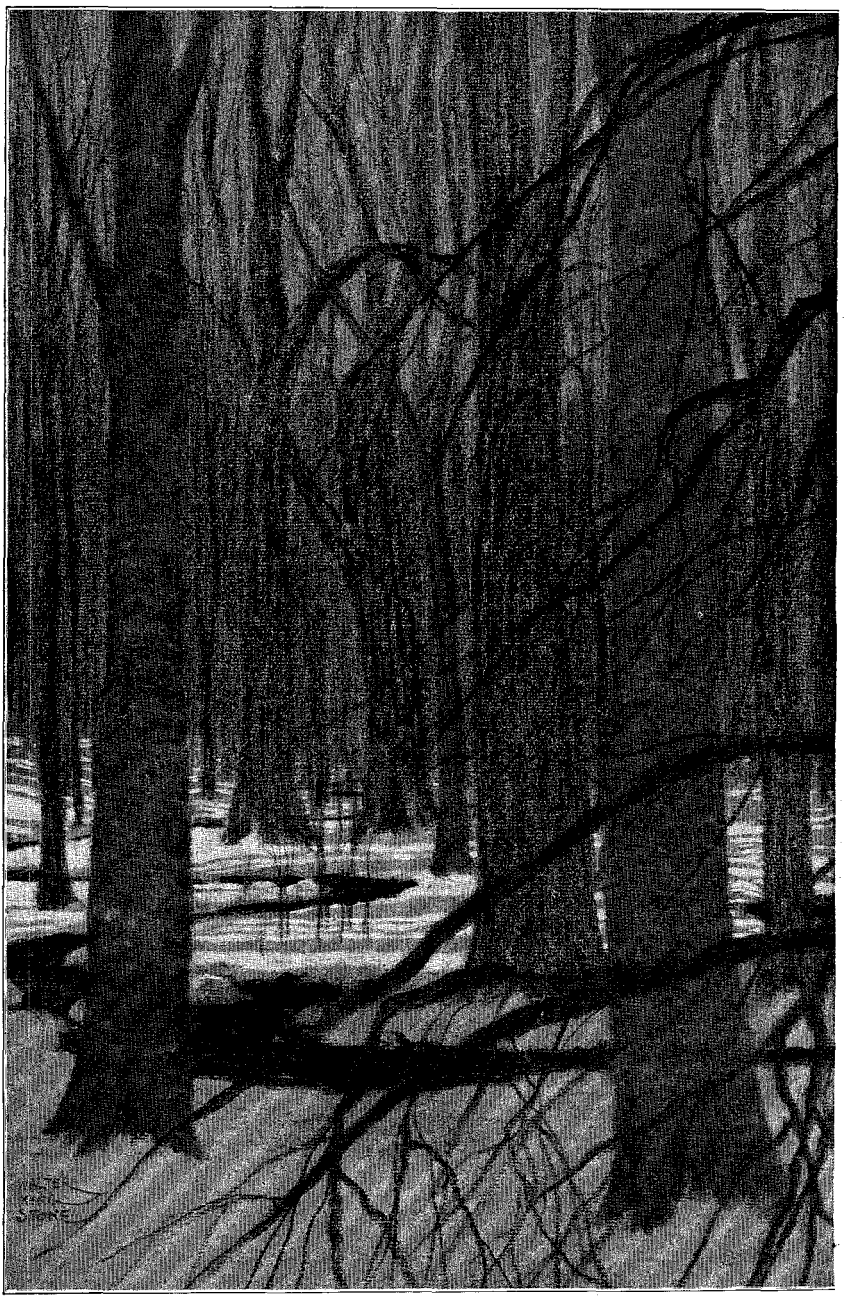

Winter, to be sure, has its moods of black and white, when pictures

the frosted lowlands are merely white and upon them each isolated chestnut or elm stands up with startling distinctness, glistening, translucent, like a fountain strangely crystallized. Beyond the lowlands, the nearer mountains are a soft, feathery gray, save where the sun catches their summits and lays upon them a glittering corona. Beyond them, in turn, are the far ranges of the next valley, blue no longer, but a pale, soft, smoky, shadow tint, and looking liquid as water, looking, indeed, like waves

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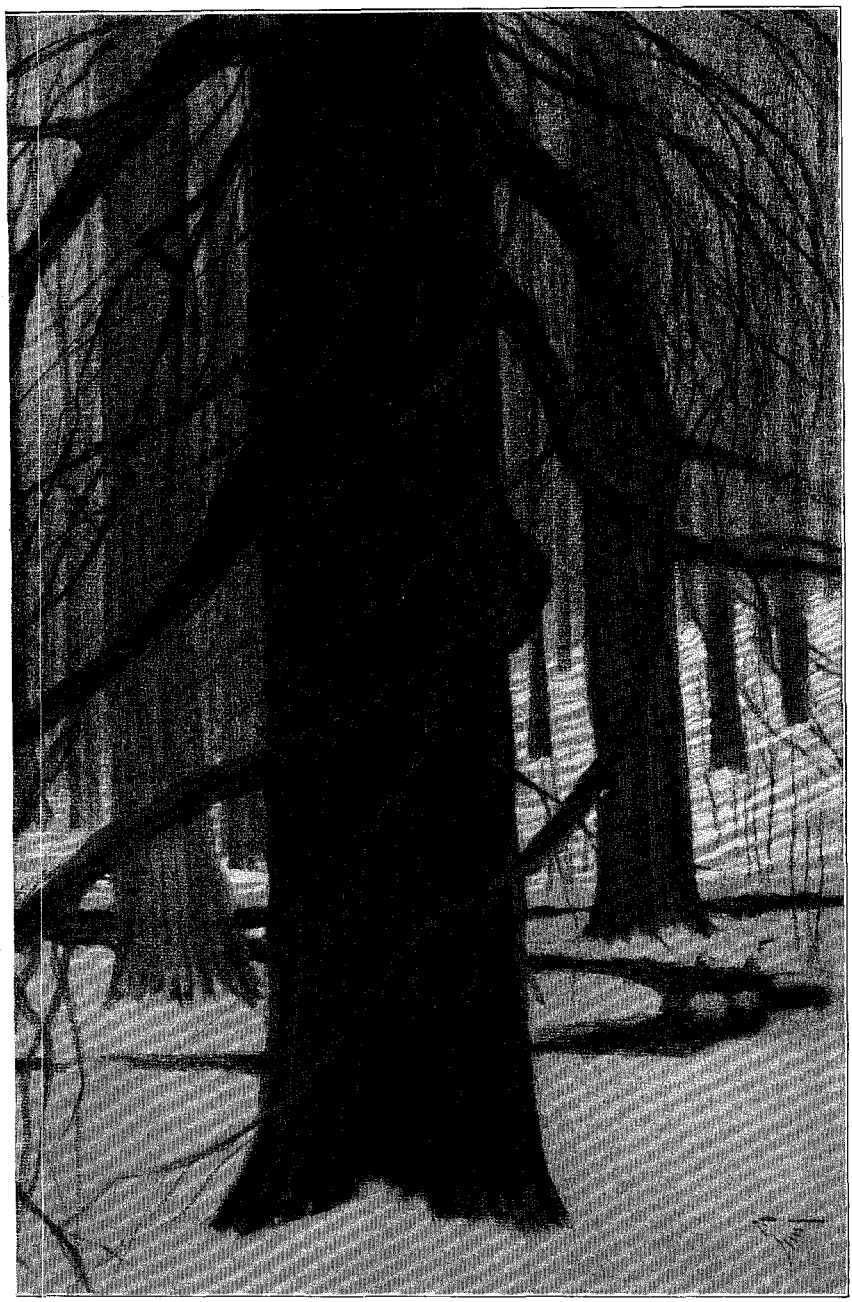

are reduced to their simple elements of line and chiaroscuro.—Page 644.

heaving along the horizon. Once in the winter the world is like this to remind us, perhaps, that the universe we customarily know is but one of a thousand possible universes, after all, and far from the most marvellous.

Bolton Coit Brown has studied the delicate landscape values in the drifting snowstorm. We can see his pictures reproduced on the scale of nature from our garden. Suppose we let (1) represent the darkest spot on the picture, our gaunt grape trellis

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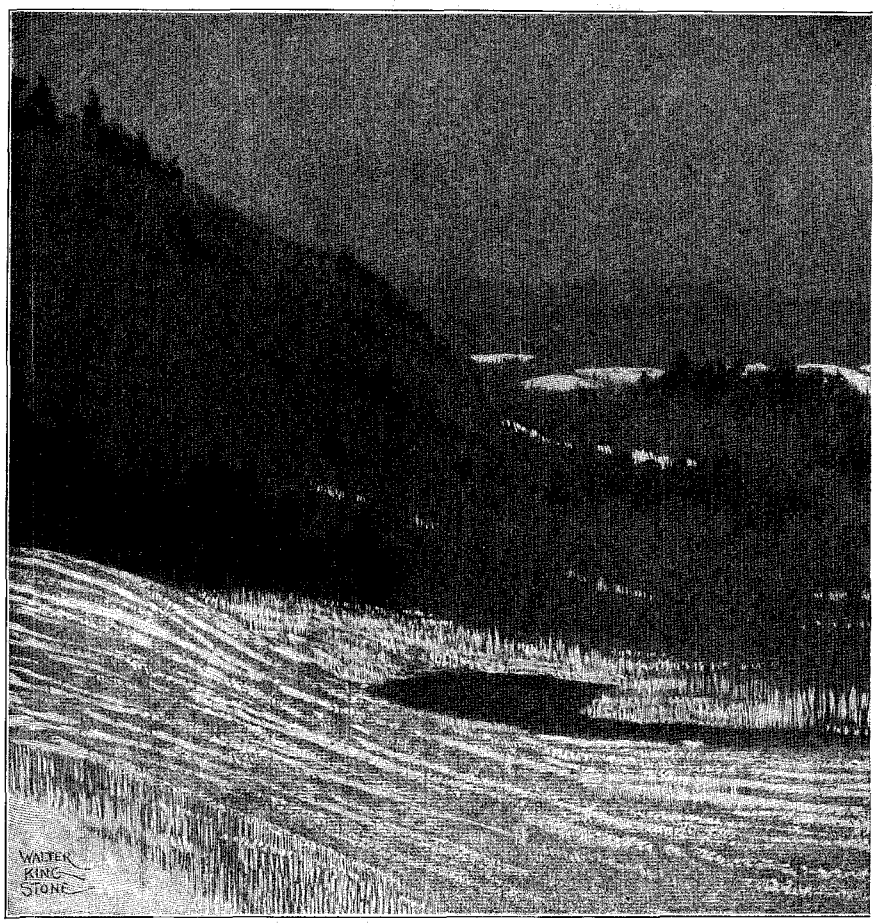

The valley lies quiet under its mantle of snow

in the foreground, for instance. Then (2) will represent the nearer trees in the orchard just beyond; (3) the farther trees and a pine across the brook; (4) will represent the ethereal, half-shrouded trees about our neighbor's house up the slope, and the glimpse of the gable and chimney. Beyond that, there is nothing but the living whiteness of the storm. We have a picture in four delicate values only; a picture where nearly everything is eliminated but the grape arbor, the ghostly arms of the orchard trees, and the hint of a house. Yet how beautiful the picture is, how suggestive, thus reduced to its lowest terms! It is Japanese in its decorative simplicity. One day, I recall, a wheelbarrow had been left out, with a load of dead apple boughs upon it, and served instead of the grape arbor as the darkest point of the picture. It was curiously transformed into a thing of beauty, and as the white snow drifted into a heap upon it, softening its outlines, it appeared to grow larger, to compose the picture about itself. I left it there till the storm began to clear, other values emerged, and finally the top of a mountain jumped into view and reduced the barrow to humbleness and its proper scale once more.

There come country days in March, the truthful recorder must admit, when even the run of sap from the maples and the smell of it boiling in the sugar house cannot quite drive out a disgust for muddy roads and melting snow, and a desire for the feel under foot of paved walks, for the bustle of cities, the scent and sound of the opera. A fresh snow flurry inspires the same resentment as a clumsy person who does not know how to make his exit from a room. One

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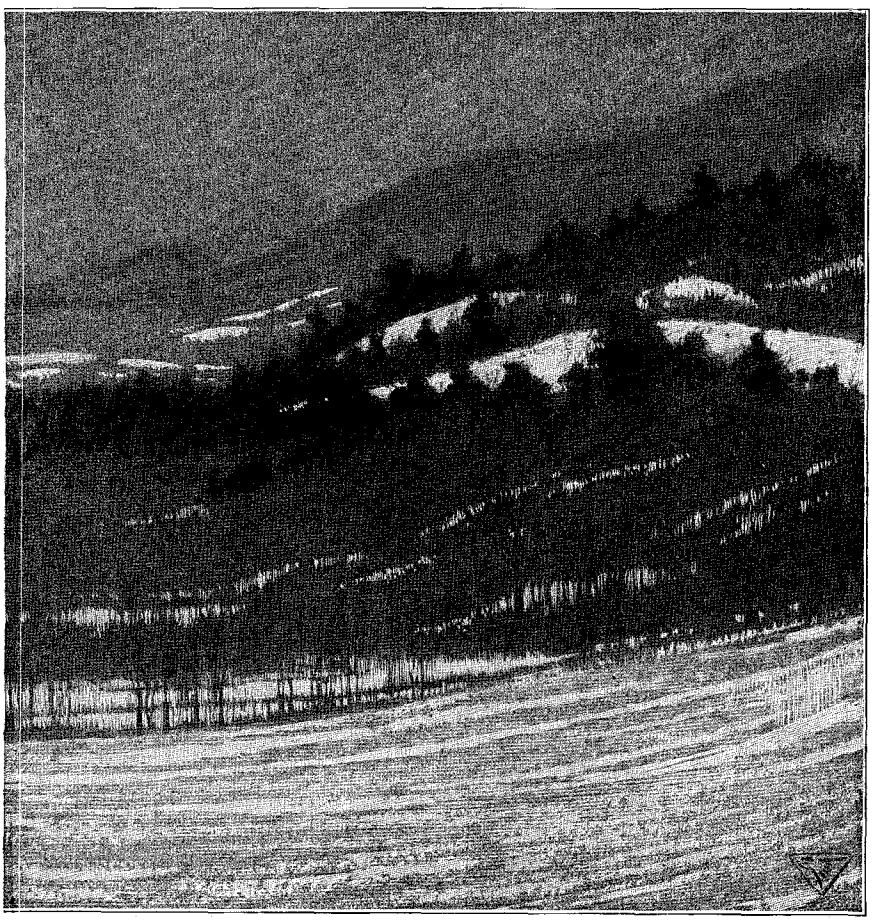

and ringed with its lovely hills.—Page 645.

waits for spring with the same uneasy feeling, the sense of wasted time, that one waits for a delayed train, or for the conductor to come for the fares. But on a magic March morning one suddenly awakes an hour before his custom and hears from the garden, not the pleasant call of the chickadees, familiar all winter, but a new, full-throated, liquid song bursting out of every evergreen and bush. The morning sun is streaming through the window square. The cover-lid feels heavy and hot. You climb from bed and hurry out into the garden. Before you, at every step, rise from the ground and flutter a little way ahead, instantly to resume their amazingly rapid, twin-footed dabs for a breakfast, the brownish-red bodies of innumerable fox-sparrows. A robin sings in the apple-tree. Wait a day or two and you will see, among the red fox-sparrows, the white tail feathers of a vesper, and hear his lovely song at twilight. Winter is over, spring is on the way. Your longing for opera vanishes like a mist. You have a sweeter vesper song; a hundred feathered Carusos are in every hedge.

Before I sat down to write this morning, Joe called me out to talk seeds. He has the cold-frames uncovered and the dressing in. Where shall we put the sweet-peas? and the melons? How many pounds of fertilizer shall we need for the potatoes? Will the Golden Bantam cross-fertilize with the Country Gentleman if we plant them together at the usual end of the garden for corn? A thousand important questions arise. We walked in the garden to settle them, the sparrows and robins hopping and fluttering before us, the air warm and sunny, the hedges musical. Yet dabs of snow

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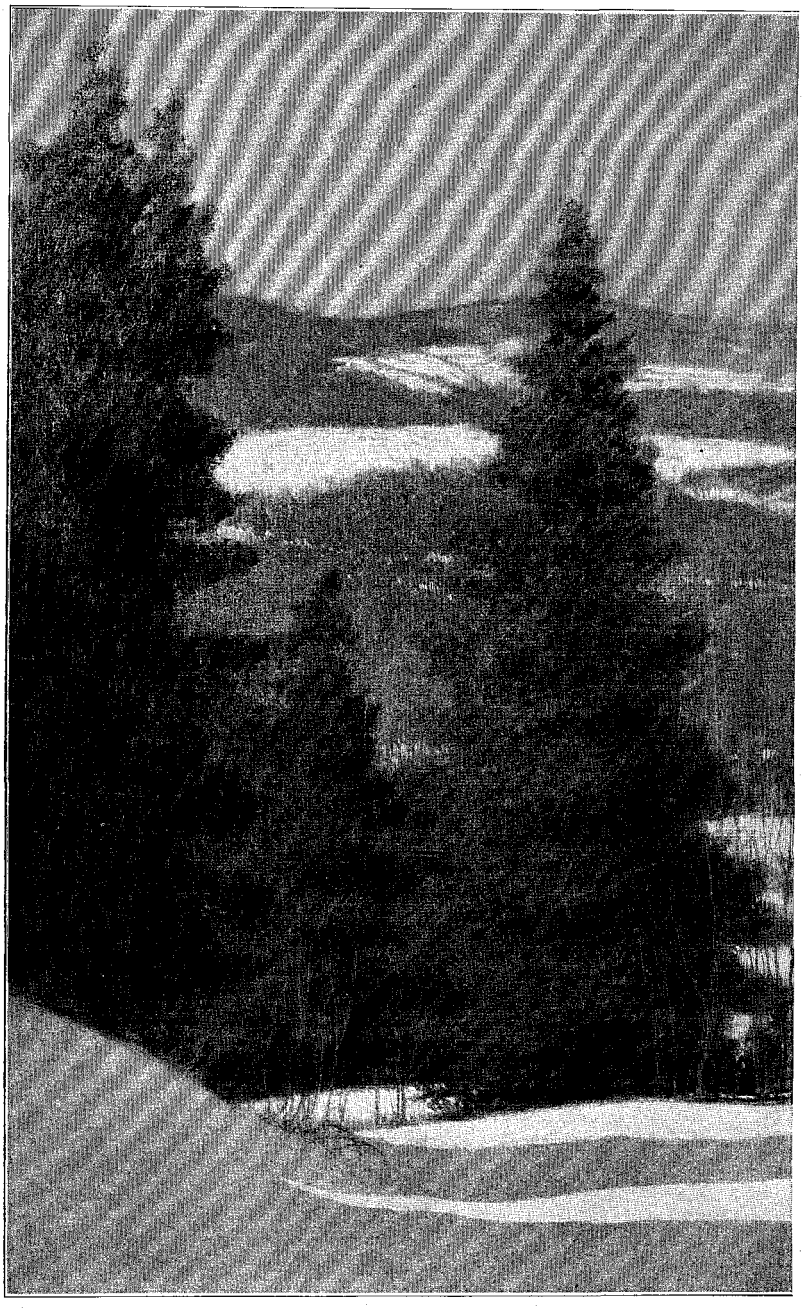

The winter world is still. . . . Everything is cool, peaceful, and the color chord of sky and

still lay in sheltered corners, and lifting our eyes to High Pasture we could see great patches of it white on the mountain. As Joe plunged his fork into the dark loam of the cold-frame, I made a snowball and tossed it toward a robin.

"Joe," said I, "spring won't really be here till I can find a blade of grass big enough to blow."

"Sure, it's here," he answered. "Oi seen the boys playin' marbles this mornin'."

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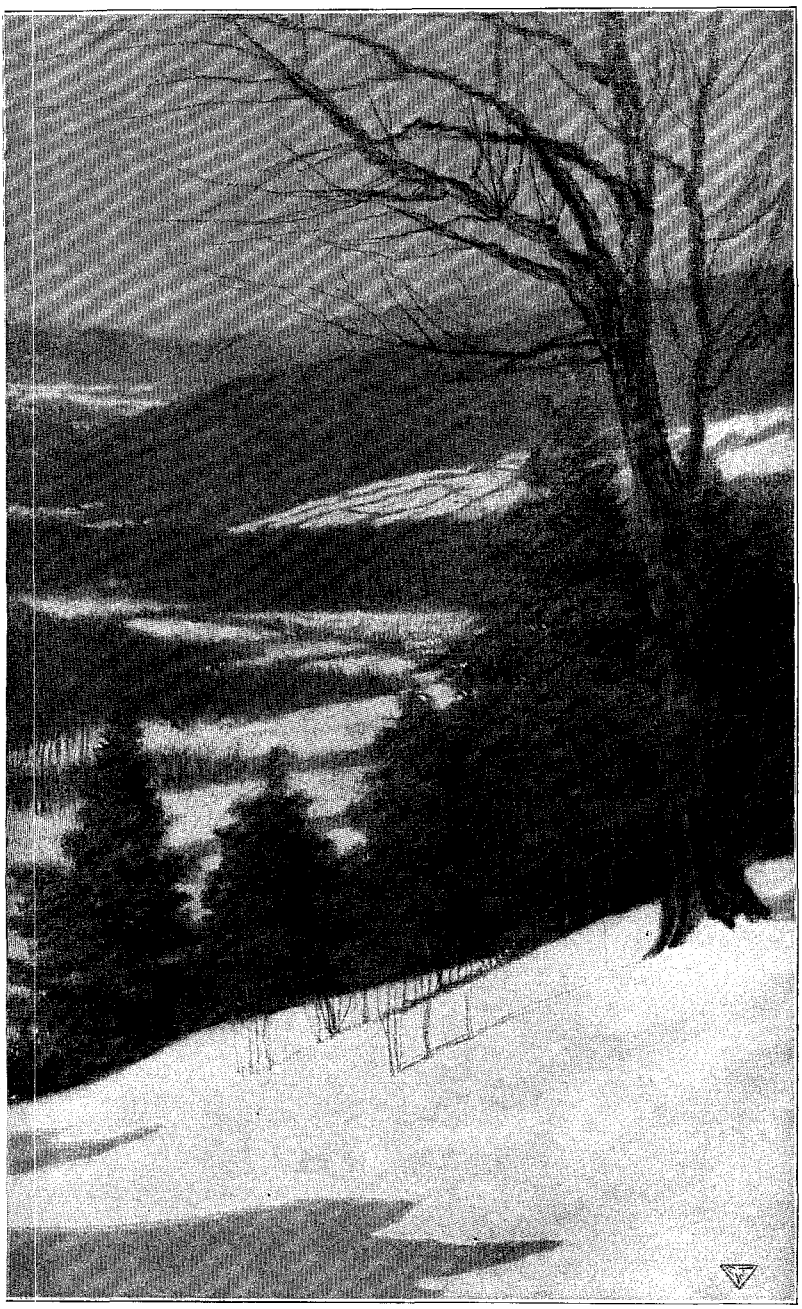

hills and rusty swamp is like the opening chord of some andante by Mozart.—Page 645.

Marbles! Marbles are not a game, except on the pavements of a city. They are a votive offering to spring and dry sidewalks, a celebration of the departure of the frost from the ground. The frost in our town usually departs first from the walk along the stone wall in front of the Episcopal Church, and it is there, almost under the shadow of the cross, that the boys celebrate their pagan, innocent Easter. If Joe saw them at it this morning, I am willing to accept the sign, and bid winter farewell.

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The slush of another snowball crumbled and melted in my hand. The climbing sun grew warmer and warmer on my neck. I looked back toward the house, where my study door stood open, the portal of duty, and sighed. I looked the other way, toward the mountain, and the scent of arbutus came to me with almost physical distinctness. Thus easily do we lay off the love of one season for the love of the next, and slip from an old pleasure to a new without regrets.

But, after all, is it not a pharisaical pleasure, this of the wind and weather, the sky and grass? Why should one write about them as if they were of profound importance? Few of us are Wordsworthians by belief. We feel depressed or gay according to the state of the weather, to be sure; but we are no less affected by the state of our stomachs or our bank accounts, and quite as many of us, surely, make a religion of our bellies or our bank accounts, as of nature! Why should I feel this superiority to my city brother, which I undoubtedly do feel, because I happen to have a garden full of sunshine, fox-sparrows, and swelling apple buds, while he has only the shop-windows on the avenue and the smell of asphalt to tell him winter has departed and spring is on the flood? Beside his warm steam radiator last winter he certainly felt no envy of me because in my ring of purple hills the chill landscape was exquisite with minor chords. Perhaps he feels no envy of me now, save for a few days while his spring fever lasts.

Yet I am Pharisee enough to pity him. With or without philosophy, the wind and weather, the sky and grass, lay their spell upon me, bidding me be near to them, responsive to their mood, and whispering to my spirit that their companionship is more to be desired than many riches, yea even than many friends. Since this message reaches me through my senses, I fear I am but a poor descendant of the Puritans, though I live in the land of Jonathan Edwards and pass his monument every day.

KEATS

By Rhoda Hero Dunn

So little time he took to glimpse the rose!
To us whose Summers are an endless tale
Each year retold in beauties red and pale,
It seems he scarcely could have watched unclose
One petaled spray, before the tender woes
Of his own shadow-sheltered nightingale
Drew him apart to some more lovely Vale
Of deeper leaves and softer flowery shows.
Yet, who of us, for all our Summer-times
Has caught one secret of the budding flower?
Or, in the garden of enhoneyed rhymes
Made of a moment's bloom a fadeless bower?
Who but this hastener to fairer climes
Half-vexed at being mortal for an hour!

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ALL FOR LOVE

By Margaret Sherwood

ILLUSTRATION BY F. WALTER TAYLOR

TO be sure it was very picturesque, this bit of Breton coast: seaward stretched blue water, edged with white foam; landward, green level spaces, broken by lines of tall poplar trees. Along the tidal river colored sails went forever up and down beyond the grass; and the quaint village where masts moved constantly beyond the houses, and where white-capped peasant women with comely faces—"as Irish as me own," said Mrs. Faunce—gathered about the old fountain in the market-place with their copper pots and pans, was just what she had expected. No one could deny the charm of the place, yet Mrs. Faunce was distinctly bored. The dinners were all that they had said, daintily served, delicious, with such soups, such entrées, such salads, such *sauce suprême* as will be found nowhere else on any shore outside of dreamland. There was no fault to find with the little hotel, gray as the gnarled and jagged rocks that lay to westward; every kind of comfort was at your beck and call, under the masterful management of Mère Fouqué, with her white Breton caps, her Breton serving maids in wooden shoes, and her Parisian *chef*. It combined, the Hotel Merlin, in all its details, those characteristics of subtlety and simplicity that belong to all high art.

But the wandering old Irish lady, student of humankind, redresser of human wrongs, was tired of it all. She had come to the shore for mental rest, she who abhorred mental rest; for physical repose, she who had no need of it, and who refused to admit, even to herself, the twinges of rheumatism about the aging bones that were so much older than her spirit. She haunted the salon, impressive in her attire of more than decent black, for her bizarre pilgrim costume of taffeta petticoat, nondescript waist, and head-dress of lace was discarded on the occasions when she wished to make apparent the simple truth that she was a lady. She conversed with the few guests in her fluid French with its touch of brogue, dozed after luncheon, wondering sleepily about the two people who passed so often, mother and daughter evidently, and as evidently English, the elder lady having that military look of being ready for battle which only the British general and the British matron wear to perfection, the daughter following with listless step as if in a dream. Mrs. Faunce watched them and yawned. Who was it, anyway, who had told her of this secluded spot? Was it M. Mostet of Julien's? She would get even with him! Did he think that she would care for the blue-smocked goatherd who came driving his flock gayly before him from door to door every night and milking in the presence of his customer? Oh, yes, she loved the pastoral thought of the goatherd with his flute and his carved staff, but, when you were near, the goats smelled so vilely—of goat!

"'Tis no nymph nor yet dryad I am," said Mrs. Faunce to herself, "to dance to that music."

Perhaps it was Herr Bernhard who had advised her to come. Just like a sentimental German to rave about these bareheaded, blue-aproned, red-petticoated women washing in the pools. It was none of this superficial picturesqueness that she wanted, but share in some bit of emotion, ripe from the heart's core, for to the old lady, insatiable of experience, the only real *sauce suprême* was human life.

Nothing in Maramol really appealed to her save two inn signs, one, "*Au Bon Diable*," the other, "*A la Réunion des Amis*," and she gazed longingly at both, missing the friendly and intimate laughter to which she was accustomed, the chatter, the keen and affectionate gibes. The hours were long between dawn and dawn; the little barelegged French children strolling with their nurses across the sands to eastward looked remote; nothing happened in the ten long days

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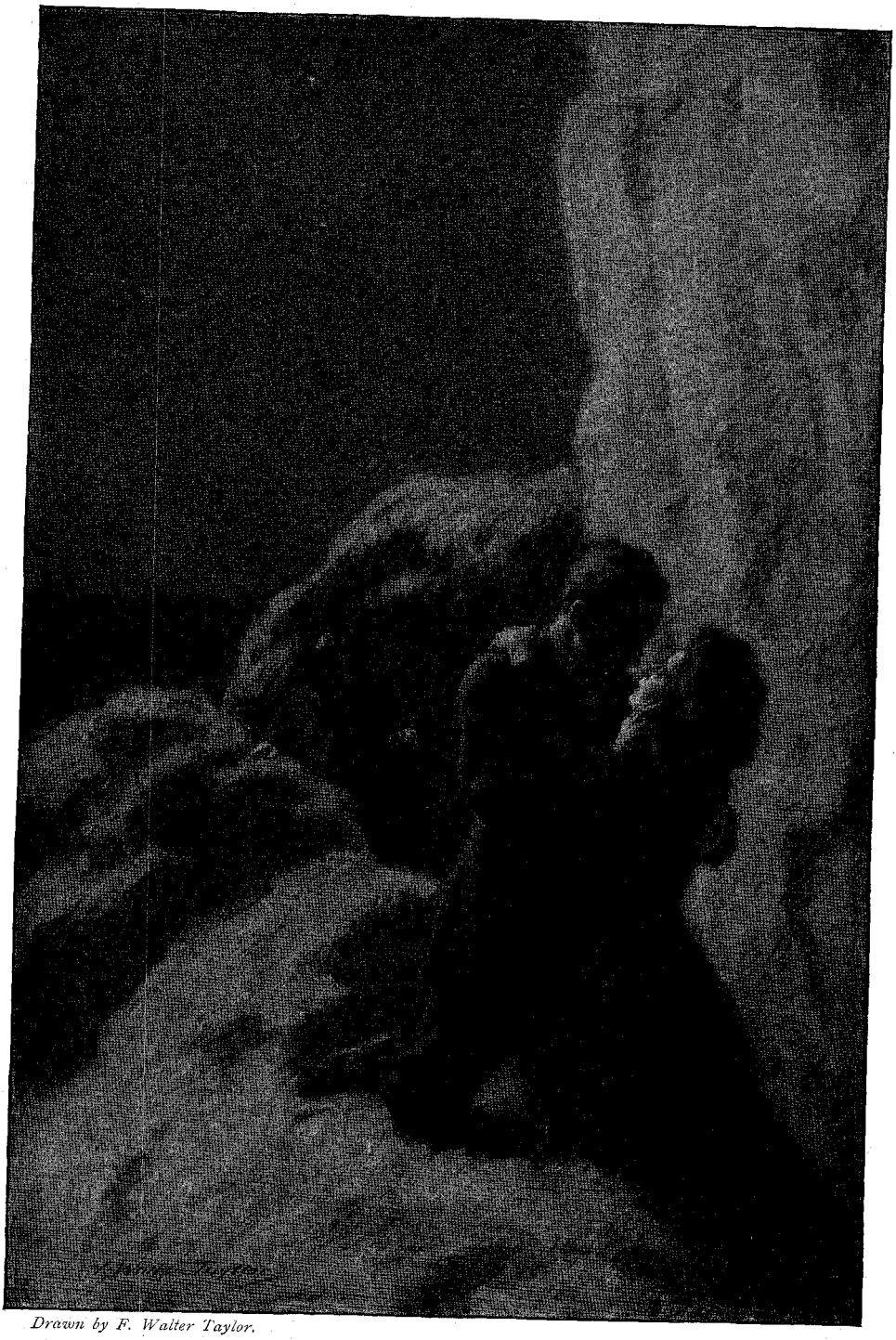

Drawn by F. Walter Taylor.

She realized in dismay . . . that these two young creatures were actually planning to take the long leap into the dark.—Page 662.

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whose hours rippled away along the shore, and, the old Irish lady was wistful and lonely. Life seemed very far away! She even thought longingly of her family, of that daughter—English now since she had been foolish enough to marry an Englishman—in her stately home, and of the formal and unendurable ways that went on behind the tall park gates.

"If me daughter hadn't taken it upon herself to inherit me less amiable traits; if she hadn't been as obstinate as meself, we might have been happy together," mused Mrs. Faunce. The grandchildren must be growing up; the little lad, Jack—could it be that he was almost a man by this time? The dark head had been far below her shoulder when she had escaped from a life that stifled her, and had become a free lance in the larger world. She actually yearned, though she would not have confessed it, to see little Jack once more, and to find him little.

Hidden in a cleft of the rocks one day she heard the waters lap and watched the waves wane; sand-pipers hopped near on slender legs, and white-winged gulls flew low, but none of these things pleased Mrs. Faunce. She looked long and hard at the ocean, then lifted her fist and shook it in the face of the vasty deep.

"Curse on you for an unsociable companion," she said grimly. "They talk of the whisperin' waves! Here I've sat, two hours and a half by me watch, and never a word have you spoken."

She paused, listening, then beat a tattoo upon the rocks.

"Sure, if you speak, 'tis English you speak with your sulky voice, and never a word of Irish. Come now, a bit of the brogue to warm me old heart!"

Here she caught sight of two people strolling across the sand, and, as they began to climb the rocks, she recognized them as the mother and daughter who had often caught her eye in the past ten days. The girl was fair to look at, except for an expression of rebellious sadness which robbed her face of its natural charm. She toiled behind her vigorous parent with a hurt, dragging step, like that of a wounded soldier. They passed, not saying a word.

"Any more than the sea," murmured Mrs. Faunce; then, just beyond a tall rock that concealed the old lady, the mother halted abruptly.

"I must go back to the villa for a minute. Sit down here, Gladys, and do not stir until I come back."

The girl was left alone, her fair hair and pure profile silhouetted against the blue sky, and something in the drooping figure made Mrs. Faunce aware, for the first time, of the pathos of this rippling, gentle sea, and this coast, wearing forever on its desolate rocks that sad expression of looking northward. Suddenly the girl's whole manner changed, and she flung out her arms toward the water with a passionate gesture of appeal.

"Hal," she said softly, with a little hurt, inarticulate cry, "Hal!" The slender figure was quivering with grief and longing. Mrs. Faunce, watching unobserved, felt a kind of awe, for it was as if she had seen a bit of inert clay suddenly smitten with the flame of human life. The face which had been as a pallid mask glowed suddenly into beauty with the hurt and the joy of love. The old lady sat very quiet, with shining eyes, and the blood beat warmly once more within her.

"He's over the water in England," she murmured, nodding to herself, "and there's trouble enough for some reason."

When the mother reappeared and led her daughter away over the rocks, Mrs. Faunce fastened her eyes on the erect, tweed-clad figure of the older woman, and watched her vigorous step.

"All English muscles work well," she said to herself, "except those of the heart." It was plain that there was tragedy here, and that this all-too-energetic woman was the maker of it; why else were the girl's footsteps so closely guarded by rock and sand and roadway? The lonely shore became suddenly full of interest for the old lady, as her keen flair for human story joyously recognized a new trail. That night she put back into her purse the bank-notes she had counted out for Mère Fouqué, for she had meant to go back to Paris tomorrow.

"Jeanne D'Arc," said Mrs. Faunce to the dark-haired Breton peasant who came thumping softly upstairs every morning with a little tray upon which rested a huge bowl of delicious *café au lait*, a monstrous table-spoon, and two small rolls, "Jeanne D'Arc, who are the two people who pass here several times a day, mother and daughter?"

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Jeanne D'Arc, whose real name was Margot, stood with arms akimbo, smiling a wide smile.

"Say paw," she answered.

"The young lady," continued Mrs. Faunce, "has beautiful golden hair."

"Ah," breathed Jeanne D'Arc, "and there is always the mother?"

"Always!"

"Mad," said the girl, tapping her forehead, "the young one, else why always the mother?"

"Nonsense!" cried the old lady. "Who are they? Where do they come from? Where do they go to?"

"Say paw!" said Jeanne D'Arc, "but they go to—Madame surely sees them going into the gates of Villa Camelot, close by?"

The old lady shook her head.

"But yes!" cried the girl. "Hundreds of times I have seen them. Look, Madame; it is but the throw of a little stone to their windows."

She drew aside the curtains of an eastern window, and there, truly enough, beyond a high wall, and beyond two slender poplar trees, appeared a building whose gray sides, long windows, and picturesque roof, hardly noticed before, became suddenly significant.

"Jeanne D'Arc," said Madame, fumbling successfully with an old-fashioned netted silk purse, "bring me the name of the English lady who lives at Villa Camelot."

That evening Jeanne D'Arc appeared again, this time with a bit of paper, which she presented triumphantly.

"But the servants are all English and dumb! They have no speech at all!" she announced. "It was the postman."

It was the same postman who, the next day, carried away from Hotel Merlin an unusual number of letters, some directed to England, some to Paris, and one to Château Miraban in Britanny, and Mrs. Faunce waited, watched, and listened.

"But why," demanded Jeanne D'Arc, as she was making the old lady's bed, "why, if somebody is not mad, do they keep the villa gates always locked?"

"Do they?" asked Mrs. Faunce, who knew it perfectly well. From the eastern window she was looking intently at the Villa Camelot, where, upon a window ledge of the second floor, a girlish head was bowed upon folded arms with an air of hopeless abandonment that brought the ever-ready mist to the old lady's eyes.

No mist, however, was dense enough to veil her keen vision, and a hundred and one things about the Villa Camelot which the tenant supposed were strictly secret were known to this elderly neighbor. That the mistress of the house never allowed any one but herself to see the postman, if she could help it, was evident, for she always, even in the rain, waited for him at the villa gate. Mrs. Faunce even knew something that the vigilant lady of the villa did not know, to wit, that the kindly gray-haired maid, on one of the few occasions when she was permitted to watch for the mail, hastily whipped something into her pocket, and that, a few minutes later, the face of the girl at the honeysuckle-bordered window grew radiant as she stooped to kiss an unopened letter. It was not hard to read the story of unhappy love that was going on; it was clear that mother and daughter held heated debates, for the sound of them, if not the words, floated over the wall, and more than once the girl was seen, with her back braced firmly against the windowembrasure, making remarks of undoubted firmness.

One day Mrs. Faunce met her mysterious young neighbor in the quaint cemetery among the weather-beaten slabs that marked the resting-places of the peasant dead. Bees were murmuring over the green spaces, and near the late yellow roses, that grew about the gray stones, and all was peace, for the soldierlike mother, who felt the need of much exercise, was marching up and down outside the wall. The girl was tracing with her finger a lichen-grown inscription upon a rough granite cross. As she heard footsteps she looked up; these two had passed each other so often that a silent friendliness of kindly glances had been established between the old lady with the gay, aged face and this girl with despairing eyes. Mrs. Faunce gave one swift glance toward the cemetery gates, and then held out her arms with: "Come, dear, and tell me all about it! Where is he?" She was one of those rare personages who recognize an opportunity when it comes. The girl, alarmed, started away like a frightened bird, then crept back, just beyond the other's reach. She did not want to be touched, apparently, by any hand but his.

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"'Tis a queer name they have given you, Gladys, that have made your eyes look like that."

"How did you know," asked the girl, breathlessly, "about him?"

Into her eyes, dull blue, dead with sorrow, life came leaping, and the pupils, expanding almost to the iris's edge, were all alight with leaping flame.

"I've been alive meself, me dear," said the old lady.

"Did you ever care for—for some one more than for all the world beside?"

"I did," said Mrs. Faunce, dashing away a tear with a mitten-clad hand.

The girl looked at her steadfastly, with that longing to read the writing of the lines, the very hieroglyphics of life, that one sees often in the faces of the young in looking on the old.

"Were you happy?" whispered Gladys.

"Whiles, and whiles not. To be happy always is not the human lot. Surely monotony of any kind would fall short of happiness; 'tis that that's the matter with the idea of heaven."

"It would be wonderful," breathed the girl, "to be happy even for a minute."

"Me poor darlin'!" cried Mrs. Faunce, "tell me all about it"; but the girl's finger was on her lip, and her eyes were fixed on the cemetery gate.

"I must go," she said hurriedly.

"Go on," said the strange old lady; "but remember, dear, I'm your friend, and 'tis me intention to help you."

She looked wistfully after the young girl as she went away, past a gray inscription: "*Que Dieu augmente sa joie!*" and the old lady murmured over and over in behalf of the living the carven prayer for the dead. Many a one had she known to whom love was much, but never before one to whom it was all, who was dedicate, soul and body, every nerve and fibre edged with flame.

It was perhaps ten days after the letters had gone, and five or six after answers had been despatched to the replies that Jeanne D'Arc brought Mrs. Faunce a black-bordered card, upon which was engraved the name of Mrs. Reginald Lucas. After a fitting delay, Mrs. Faunce descended to the salon, dignified, bespangled, trailing after her a long black gown, and holding her head high in the grand manner that was all her own. The military mother, no longer attired in tweeds, yet still wearing the air of one booted and spurred, rose and held out her hand.

"My friend, Lady Andermere, has told me of your being here, and has asked me to call, Madame——"

"Mrs. Faunce," interrupted the old lady quickly. "I've come incognito, for I need seclusion and rest."

Mrs. Reginald Lucas was deeply impressed, as who would not be? The remarks of the hostess were all that were courteous; not so her thoughts, if the truth were known, for her first one was: "'Tis a cruel mouth you've got, for all your smiling." Wheedling, but tactful, she made innumerable inquiries without seeming to do so, and this is what she learned from the preoccupied mother whose anxious eyes kept turning toward Villa Camelot. She was here for the sake of her daughter Gladys, who was far from well, and they were leading the quietest possible life. The child was suffering from a complicated disorder in regard to which expert opinion had pronounced itself uncertain; she was subject to sudden seizures, and had to be constantly watched.

"Now that is where I could help you, if you would permit me," cried Mrs. Faunce. "I've nothing to do, and I'm eating me heart out with the loneliness of it all. I'm fond of the young." She got no promise from her guest, but hope that she might share the guardianship of the girl was high within her as Mrs. Lucas stalked away.

"Actin' the part of affectionate mother," muttered Mrs. Faunce, "as well as if she'd been trained for it on the stage. I can't help thinkin' of the rehearsals."

On the days following the old lady waited with some impatience. Lonely walks and lonelier drives by shining, shivering silver poplars in the sad, cool air of early fall failed to divert her mind from its purpose. Yet she got small chance to carry out her plans, and she wondered if this inability to help meant that she was growing old. Life responded usually more readily to her touch. Once, in a brief talk with the frightened girl, reluctantly permitted by Mamma, who was vainly trying to speak the Breton dialect with the postman, she got a bit of information about the lover. Hal was young too, only twenty, but they had cared a lifetime, or at least two years, having met her first season in London. The trouble?

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There was no real trouble that the girl could see. To be sure he was lame; a bad fall from his horse in the hunting field four years ago had crippled him for life. "I love him all the more for that, of course," said Gladys. Opposition on the part of her mother had roused his family and precipitated a quarrel, and now that opposition had hardened into stone. His mother had said that she would die before she would permit the marriage; her mother had said that they would go to the wedding over her dead body if they went at all.

"Tell me truth," commanded Mrs. Faunce. "Have they no reason better than that? Is there no wrong-doin' to keep you apart?"

The girl protested that there was nothing.

"'Tis all made up of little things, pique and pride?"

"Such little things," said Gladys of the violet eyes and wind-blown hair, "that you would think they would be ashamed to think of them."

"Hal," said the old lady, "Hal. 'Tis a pretty name, and one associated with more than one madcap." She watched shrewdly for the light that she knew was coming to the girl's face.

"To mention his name is to have all the pleasure of creatin' the child from the beginning," she said to herself. The girl laughed out.

"His real name is John Henry," she vouchsafed.

"And I presume he's a hero and a genius, and altogether the most gifted bein' that ever was," but the girl shook her head, smiling.

"He isn't a genius at all and he hasn't any extraordinary gifts. He's just the best and most lovable human being that ever was." Mrs. Faunce listened with humorous disdain.

"Now what you youngsters are made of I fail to know," she sighed. "If I had a lover, he'd be to me a hero and a genius, even if I knew 'twas contrary to the facts."

The very next day Jeanne D'Arc was much excited. An attempt had been made last evening, she was sure, to rob the Villa Camelot. She herself had seen a man trying to climb over the wall; should she tell the police? A broad smile illuminated Mrs. Faunce's face, as she promised to take the responsibility of communicating with the people at the villa; and she set herself to watch. By many indubitable signs she realized that something was indeed happening. A shadow on the wall; the sight of a face beyond the furze hedge; a footstep under her window; a figure retreating swiftly beyond the rocks as mother and daughter went out for their walk, made up a chain of evidence that delighted her. She hurried up from dinner in the evenings, giving up desserts, and sat by her eastern window in the twilight, fearful lest some link in the chain of this story should escape her. Once or twice she saw a dark figure lurking under the villa wall, and more than once she heard the sound of a tinkling stone upon a window-pane. In the silence that followed, she knew that the intruder waited and listened, but he did not wait nor listen more eagerly than did she, her old Irish heart beating in sympathy. Try as she might she got no chance to tell the unconscious girl that her lover was near, and he was apparently as unsuccessful.

One evening, at sundown, Mrs. Faunce pricked up her ears, for she heard a familiar and yet an unfamiliar sound. Shrill bleating, the quick, multitudinous tread of many hard little feet, meant that the flock of goats was coming home, but it was an odd and uncertain melody that the flute gave out. The goatherd stopped, as usual, at the locked gateway of Villa Camelot; surely his step was odd; had he suddenly gone lame? Yet that was his blue smock, and the battered felt hat pulled down over his ears, but he was taller by a head than he had been. Old Breton tales of fairy folk rushed to her mind, of fays who stole for a time human form for the accomplishment of their purposes. What had happened to the lad out in green pastures among the furze and gorse? Anxious, she knew not why, she watched him as he led the flock—stepping daintily behind him, the kids darting out and leaping high in play—to the very door, and she saw, too, the quick flash of a hand all too white as something flew through the air into the open window by which Gladys sat, listlessly watching the dull red sunset that flamed beyond rocky coast and gray sea in the west. The girl sprang up as if she had been stung; a moment later she was at the back door demanding evidently, by signs, that the goatherd teach her how to milk. The maid who brought the copper

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basin laughed aloud as she gave it to her young mistress, and Mrs. Faunce waited breathless; would the maid suspect?

"Not she! She's but English and has no eyes in her head," said the old Irish lady as she saw Gladys kneel beside a black goat, and saw the goatherd's fingers reverently close over hers as he gave her a lesson in milking. The girl proved but a slow pupil, and, in truth, had but an awkward teacher. Watchful goat eyes were upon the two as the heads bent close together, and dainty noses sniffed curiously at the girl's white gown, but neither goat nor human ears heard the words that passed between master and pupil, if words there were. The old lady chuckled; so had love at last gained admission to the villa gates.

The next morning, as mother and daughter took their constitutional on the rocks, the girl's step was alert and quick.

"You are better, Gladys," said the mother. "The sea air is doing you good."

"Yes, Mamma," said the English girl obediently.

That afternoon Mrs. Faunce strolled out into the country, whose beauty of deep green furze and broom with golden butterflies fluttering above the yellow blossoms was still hidden from her. It was the life-worn, weather-beaten faces of the peasants that interested her, the thatched roofs of their houses, the cold little stone churches where they said their prayers, and she gave back the invariable "*Bon jour*" with friendly warmth. She passed an old, old wrinkled woman in wooden sabots, with a little shawl pinned across her flat bosom, kneeling, but not in prayer, at the roadside and breaking stones for the highways of the republic, and she was almost envious, forever jealous of every kind of human experience that she had not had. Then, between the hawthorn hedges, whose thick, ferny tangles bordered deep-set roads, she saw two shadows lengthening, and, lifting her head, she sniffed the breeze with new zest, for the shadows pleased her. She had no need to see the forms that cast them to know of intertwined arms and lips that met and met again. One glimpse she caught of the girl's transfigured face, but that of the slender lad at her side was hidden. The old lady drew a deep sigh of satisfaction, for the sight of young love was to her as the very breath of her nostrils, and it always gave her the feeling of being on the very track of the meaning of things which had so long eluded her. For some reason it seemed nearer in other stories than in her own. Now she laughed aloud, as she watched unseen. Was that one of the sudden seizures of which the mother had complained? Probably Gladys had escaped through the agency of that kind, elderly maid; it was pitiful to see the terrified way in which she kept turning to see if they were pursued. When the lovers passed Mrs. Faunce she was kneeling at the side of the road, helping the old stone-breaking woman, and they did not see her.

"Have you the courage to do it, Gladys?" the young man was saying, and the girl's answer rang out clearly:

"Yes!"

That night something really happened. It was dim moonlight, but the stealing figure by the wall of the Villa Camelot was clearly visible to the keen old eyes that watched from the window of the Hotel Merlin. Presently the villa gates opened ever so little, ever so softly, and a dark form stole out. For an instant the two dusky shadows melted into one, and then Mrs. Faunce watched them as they went swiftly down the long, shaded avenue. The sudden hoot of a little owl sounded out satirically in the silence, and the listener echoed it with a groan. Those two young things were taking their lives in their hands, she knew, and running away together, for better or for worse, and she did not lift a finger to stop them, being sorry chiefly that she had found no opportunity to help.

"Few enough chances in a lifetime to be happy," she mused; "what little there is here they are wise to take." She felt lonelier than ever after they had gone, and got out her time-table, for she would go back to Paris in a day of two.

"That's all over," she said to herself as she went to bed.

But it was far from being all over, for there was that night in Villa Camelot a commotion of which Mrs. Faunce knew nothing, and she was sleeping soundly when a carriage drove furiously away from the villa gates at midnight. The next afternoon there was a commotion about which she knew much, a sound of servants' voices chattering excitedly, a picture of a closed carriage stopping at the gate, of a pale girl,

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with head bent, escorted inside the villa walls by two men, so ostentatiously dressed as mere citizens that she knew them at once as detectives. The mother marched down the walk, with the air of a commander drilling his troops; Mrs. Faunce was glad that she could not hear the invectives poured out on that fair bowed head. Poor little prisoner, captured and brought back to her cage! Donna Quixote buried her face in her hands in agonized meditation. What could she do?

Her polite call, a day or two after, was not fruitful of results. Insisting upon seeing Gladys, she was at last permitted to, the mother evidently wishing to conceal the fact that anything was wrong. A minute only did she have for free speech.

"Cheer up, dear!" she whispered, putting her hand on the girl's damp forehead. Gladys shook her head.

"There isn't any hope," she said.

"Now, 'tis only youth that ever thinks there's no hope!" asserted the visitor with fine spirit. "'Tis worth living for, love."

"Is it worth dying for?" asked Gladys abruptly. Her eyes had a look of strain and of finality which escaped the old lady because of the moisture in her own.

"To be sure it is!" cried Mrs. Faunce. "What else is, if love isn't?"

The gallant old lady was ashamed of herself. Even she, heroine of many contests from which she almost invariably came off victor, found herself shivering at the sound of the military mother's returning footsteps as they echoed along the hardwood floor. She was afraid, so far down was she shaken by the frightened beating of this little heart! Disconsolate at her inability to help, she wandered forth after dinner, contrary to her usual habit, suddenly aware of the tragedy of this remote, desolate coast, with its endless, ill-fated fishing-boats, sailing out over this sinister water. A horror came upon her of she knew not what, and the gathering shadows in the west, the creeping twilight over the sea, the fitful gleams of a clouded moon only emphasized it. How long she sat there in the damp air she did not know; presently she became aware of human voices near. Listened? Of course. She had yet to hear the bit of human speech to which she would not listen, and it would have been physically impossible for her to close her ears to the sound of vivid passion here.

"Hal," said the girl, "it isn't any use."

There was no answer, only a long, long, breathless kiss, and all the air grew tense with silence.

"I am watched every minute, night and day," the girl's voice went on, "and I cannot get away again, any more than I could from London Tower. It sounds like the Middle Ages, but it is true. Jane let me come to-night, because I promised her it was the last time, the very last time."

"I am sure that, next time, I can get you away safely," said the boy stoutly.

"They would bring us back again; it would always be the same." The note of surrender in the girl's voice startled the old lady.

"But I won't give up, alive or dead!" Whatever of boyishness there was in the tones, the eternal masculine vibrated there bravely, and Mrs. Faunce nodded in delight.

"Good boy!" she chuckled, "the old-fashioned kind."

So she sat and listened, while great waves of life rolled over the two young bowed heads.

"Even if we did escape again—think of my mother sending detectives after me, detectives!—even if we did escape the police and went to America, we could do nothing. You could not earn money, for you have not health, nor could I. They have taught us no way of taking care of ourselves, and there is so much besides ourselves to think of."

A fine, creeping scorn was on the old lady's face; just like the present generation, always thinking about money, even in grand moments like these! The calculating young things could never lose themselves in finer feelings.

"It kills me to hear you say such things!" cried the boy. Mrs. Faunce's hands were clenched at her sides, as she instinctively felt that his were clenched.

"There isn't any hope," said Gladys, in dull despair. "Something must be done, for I am afraid. Why not now?"

As the old lady listened, she realized, in dismay touched with vivid appreciation, that these two young creatures, in this twentieth century, free children of the freest race, were actually planning, impelled by love, to take the long leap into the dark. They meant it, the desperate young creat-

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ures! She was proud of them, and all her aged frame thrilled to the wonder and the mystery of the moment. Some were there left, even in this iron-clad generation, to whom love was stronger than death.

But she did not realize, even when she saw them clasped in each other's arms for a last long embrace, wherein vibrated great issues of life and death—she did not realize that they meant to do it now. It was only the quick working of her quick wit that made her leap in time. Standing together, at the edge of a deep chasm, hand in hand, they paused to kiss once more before they sprang.

"When I say 'Now,'" said the lad, "jump far!"

Another second and she had been too late! Stung by sudden, awful fear, she scrambled over the few intervening rocks and grasped the skirt of the girl's serge gown, the tail of the lad's sack coat. She caught and clung, falling upon her knees as she did so, thinking only how dark these rocks were to leap from into the dark water below. The bright moon, struggling with dark masses of cloud, revealed the slow tears trickling down over her wrinkled cheeks from her shining eyes.

"To think that you two young things cared enough for that!" said Mrs. Faunce. "Poor children! Poor children!" She stroked the girl's foot, the lad's shoulder. Gladys leaned against a great stone, pallid, with eyes closed, and the boy crouched low upon the rocks, his face hidden in his arms, trembling in every fibre.

"Few there is this day would die for love," said the old lady solemnly, relaxing her grasp long enough to dry her eyes, and hastily taking hold again. The girl said nothing; the shadows of eternity were resting still on that young face.

"And the wonder of your being English!" chuckled Mrs. Faunce. "I wouldn't have expected it of you! If you were Irish lad and lass it would be more natural."

"I'm half Irish," said the boy, from under his supporting arms.

"You are?" She shook him vigorously in her delight. "Sure the sound of your voice would prove it! 'Tis only an Irish lad could be such a lover! Now tell me your good Irish name."

"John Henry Bascome," he answered, sitting up; the moonlight shone full upon his face.

"John Henry Bascome!" cried the old lady. "*You*"—but words would not suffice to express her feelings as this bit of life's pageant translated itself from pure romance into the misdeeds of her next of kin. "You here, me own grandson, with me own blood in your veins, makin' a coward of yourself in this way! How dare you look me in the face? 'Twas courage you should have drunk in with your mother's milk, she that was me own daughter. Shame on you for a coward, a coward!" she stormed. "Do you know what you're throwin' away? Life, I tell you, *life;* 'tis a wonderful thing, and how do you know when you'll get it again? When will legs and brain and a heart be meted out to you again that was too big a coward to use 'em?"

"Legs," murmured the boy bitterly, touching his lame foot.

"But you said," gasped the bewildered girl, looking about with dazed, wide eyes, "you said yourself that love was worth dying for, and it hurt; it hurt too much." The old lady turned in a fury.

"Hurt, you baby! Thank heaven that it does hurt, and that you've come to the stage in the great panorama of bein' when you're permitted to be hurt. Would you be a clod or a stick or a stone by choice when you've had life offered to you, and pain? Down on your knees, the two of you, and thank the saints for the hurt of it. 'Tis a privilege and an opportunity."

There were voices calling here and there over the rocks, and dark figures, lantern-lighted, searching here and there in the moonlight. Gladys shivered and covered her face with her hands.

"I am afraid," she said simply. "We did not know what else to do. Hal's father and mother are coming; they must be here now, for Mamma telegraphed. Mamma is——"

At the sound of her mother's voice, calling "Gladys, Gladys!" she trembled; then she was gathered close to the old lady's tear-wet bosom.

"Come to me arms, dears, and I'll make you a chance to live your lives as you want 'em. Jack, dear, did Granny ever lie to you? It cuts me like a knife to see your poor hurt foot, and to know you are driven to this. Wait! If me daughter has ceased to obey me, 'tis me daughter she shall be no longer."

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The voices drew nearer; dark forms passed a few paces away, and Mrs. Faunce knew that the tall man who held the lantern was no other than the English son-in-law whom she had long scorned for his lack of feeling.

"Stay quiet where you are," commanded the old lady. "Play me no tricks when me back is turned with your silly jumpin' into the water. Jack, little Jack, when you sat on me lap as a baby I told you to be a man, a man! Be one now!"

When the searchers neared the summit of the highest cliff they saw, under the shifting light and shade of the uncertain moonlight, a bizarre figure standing there, weird as any witch or fay of Breton story. In silence the old lady waited as they drew nearer, the moonlight revealing the stricken faces of the women, and the grave anxiety of this gray-haired man. None of the anxious questions did she answer as to whether she had seen the fugitives, and she heeded none of the outcries as she was recognized. Her eyes were fixed sternly upon those of Mrs. Reginald Lucas.

"Do you know what you've done, you wooden image of an English mother? You've driven your daughter to her death!"

The mother's outcry was drowned by Mrs. Faunce's next words.

"And you, Ellen Aileel Denleigh Bascome, me daughter, to whom I gave life, why have you driven with your foolish quarrellings those two poor young things into the jaws of eternity?" Her own, sharp set, seemed so grim an image of those of eternity that the spectators shuddered.

"My God!" said the man, shaken by great sobs. The old lady watched him admiringly. "I didn't suppose he had it in him," she murmured. Both women were weeping, their faces covered with their hands, and Mrs. Faunce looked on with grim satisfaction.

"My son! My son!" moaned Jack's heart-broken mother.

"O Gladys!" It was no wooden image that made that outcry.

"Tell me now," demanded the old lady, from her vantage ground of higher rock, "if those two were alive before you this minute, would you leave your silly bickering and let them have each other for better or worse?"

"God knows we would," said the stricken father.

"And you?" The gaunt forefinger pointed to Mrs. Lucas.

"I would," she answered, between her sobs.

"Then go yonder and find them on the rocks, alive but by the grace of God and the quickness of me old muscles. And may God have mercy on your miserable souls if you betray the promise you have made me."

DECEMBER

By Ethel Hobart

Oh, the bare old trees in their sweeping grays,
And the gleam of the sapphire sea,
And the sun and the tang of these brilliant days
Are bread and wine to me!

Oh, the firm white road beneath my tread
And the stubble, pinkish-brown,
And the hills in their wonderful purple-red,
And the clear-cut distant town—

And the stately glow in the orange west
Still and lingering—
Have brought to weary hearts more rest
Than all the balms of spring.

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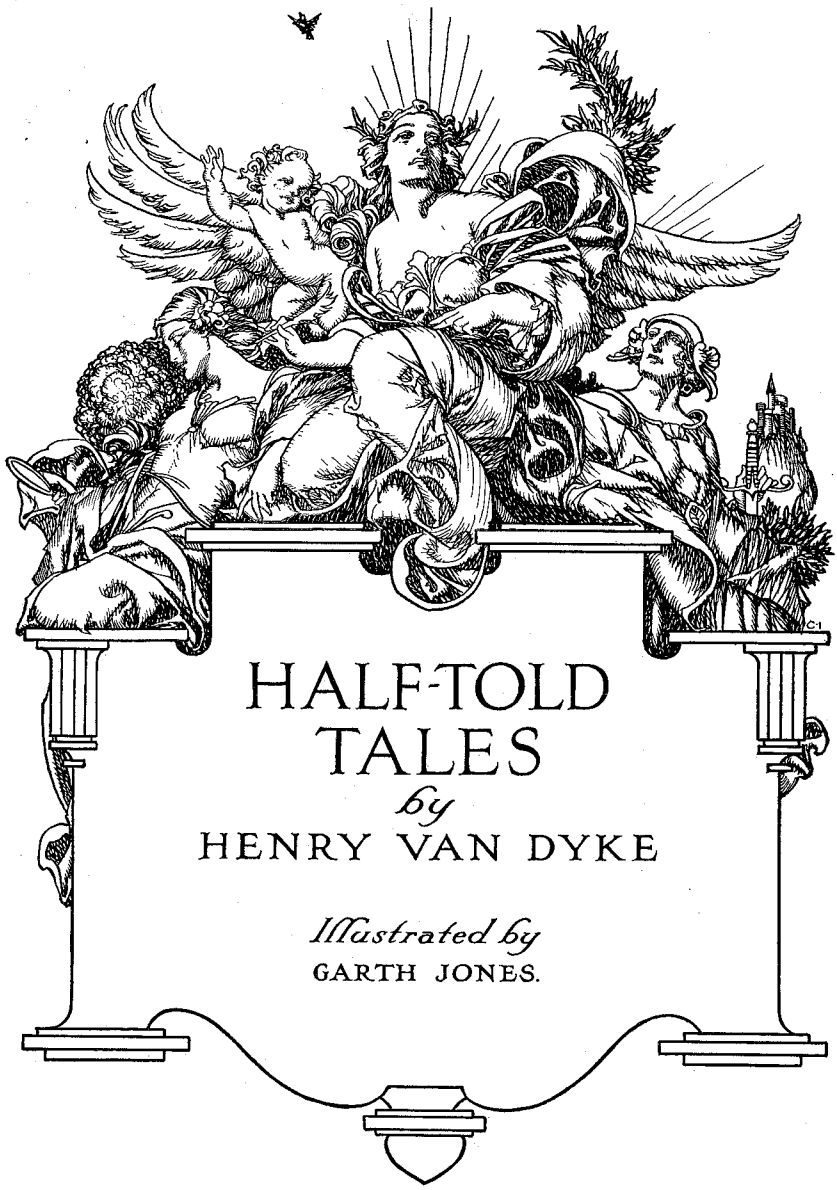

HALF-TOLD TALES

by

HENRY VAN DYKE

Illustrated by

GARTH JONES.

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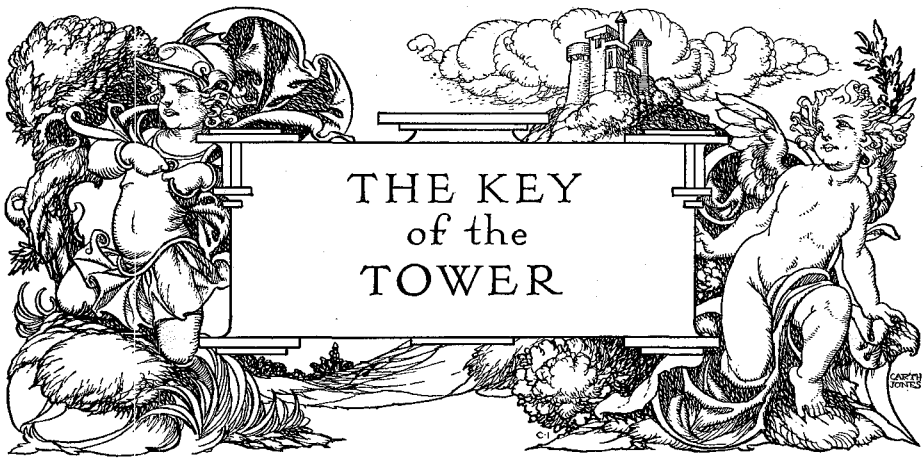

SO the first knight came to the Tower. Now his name was *Casse-Tout*, because wherever he came there was much breaking of things that stood in his way. And when he saw that the door of the Tower was shut (for it was very early in the morning, and all the woods lay asleep in the shadow, and only the weather-cock on the uppermost gable of the roof was turning in the light wind of dawn), it seemed to him that the time favored a bold deed and a masterful entrance.

He laid hold of the door, therefore, and shook it; but the door would not give. Then he set his shoulder to it and thrust mightily; but the door did not so much as creak. Whereupon he began to hammer against it with his gloves of steel, and shouted with a voice as if the master were suddenly come home to his house and found it barred.

When he was quite out of breath, between his shoutings, he was aware of a small, merry noise as of one laughing and singing. So he listened, and this is what he heard:

"Hark to the wind in the wood without!
I laugh in my bed while I hear him roar,
Blustering, bellowing, shout after shout,—
What do you want, O wind, at my door?"

Then he cried loudly, "No wind am I, but a mighty knight, and your door is shut. I must come in to you, and that speedily!" But the singing voice answered:

"Blow your best, you can do no more;
Batter away, for my door is stout;
The more you threaten, I laugh the more,—
Hark to the wind in the wood without!"

So he hammered a while longer at the oaken panels until he was wearifully wroth, and when the sun was rising he went his way with sore hands and a sullen face.

"No doubt," said he, "there is a she-devil in the Tower. I hate those who put their trust in brute strength."

It was mid-morn when there came a second knight to the Tower, whose name was *Parle-Doux*. And he was very gentle-spoken, and full of favorable ways, smiling always when he talked, but his eyes were cool and ever watchful. So he made his horse prance delicately before the Tower and looked up at the windows smiling.

"Fair house," said he, "how well art thou fashioned, and with what beauty does the sunlight adorn thee! Here dwells the wonder of the world, the lady of all desires, the princess of my good fortune. Would that she might look upon me and see that the happy hour has come!"

Then there was a little sound at one of the upper windows, and the lattice clicked open. But the lady who stood there was closely covered with a jewelled veil, and nothing could be seen of her but her hand, with many rings upon it, holding a key.

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"Marvel of splendor," said *Parle-Doux*, "moon of beauty, jewel of all ladies! I have won you to look upon me, now let fall the key."

"And then?" said the lady.

"Then, surely," said the knight, "I will open the door without delay, and spring up the stairs, winged with joy, and——"

But before he had finished speaking, with the smile on his face, the hand was drawn back, and the lattice clicked shut.

So the knight sang and talked very beautifully for about the space of three hours in front of the Tower. And when he rode away it was just as it had been before, only the afternoon shadows were falling.

A little before sunset came the third knight, and his name was *Fais-Brave*.

Now the cool of the day had called all the birds to their even-song, and the flowers in the garden were yielding up their sweetness to the air, and through the wood Twilight was walking with silent steps.

So the knight looked well at the Tower, and saw that all the windows were open, though the door was shut, and on the grass before it lay a jewelled veil. And after a while of looking and waiting and thinking and wondering, he got down from his horse, and took off the saddle and bridle, and let him go free to wander and browse in the wood. Then the knight sat down on a little green knoll before the Tower, and made himself comfortable, as one who had a thought of continuing in that place for a certain time.

And after the sun was set, when the longest shadows flowed into dusk, the lady came walking out of the wood toward the Tower. She was lightly singing to herself a song of dreams. Her face was uncovered, and the gold of her hair was clear as the little floating clouds high in the West, and her eyes were like stars. When the knight saw her he stood up and could say nothing. But all the more he looked at her, and wondered, and his thoughts were written in his face as if they stood in an open book.

Long time they looked at each other thus; and then the lady held out her hand with a key in it.

"What will you do with this key?" said she, "if I give it to you?"

"Is it the key of your Tower?" said he.

"Ay!" said she.

"I will give it back to you," said he, "until it pleases you to open the door."

"It is yours," said she.

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THE BEGGARS under the BUSH

AS I came round the bush I was aware of four beggars in the shade of it, counting their spoils.

They sat at their ease, with food and a flagon of wine before them and silver cups, for all the world like gentlefolk on a picnic, only happier. But I knew them for beggars by the boldness of their asking eyes and the crook in their fingers.

They looked at me curiously, as if to say, "What do you bring us?"

"Nothing, gentlemen," I answered, "I am only seeking information."

At this they moved uneasily and glanced at one another with a crafty fierceness. Their crooked fingers closed around the cups.

"Are you a collector of taxes?" cried the first beggar.

"Certainly not," I replied with heat, "but a payer of them!"

"Come, come," said the beggar, with a wink at his comrades, "no insult intended! Only a prudent habit of ours in these days of mixed society. But you are evidently poor and honest. Take a chair on the grass. Honesty we love, and to poverty we have no objection—in fact, we admire it."

So I sat down beside them in the shade of the bush and lit my pipe to listen.

In the hot field below a man was ploughing through the glare of the sun The reins hung about his neck like a halter, and he clung to the jerking handles of the plough while the furrows of red earth turned and fell behind him like welts on the flank of the hill.

"A hard life," said the second beggar, draining his cup, "but healthy! And very useful! The world must have bread."

"Plenty of it," said the third beggar, "else what would become of that?"

He nodded down the valley, where tall spires pointed toward the blue and taller chimneys veiled it with black. The huddled city seemed to move and strain and quiver under the dusky curtain and the fumes of its toil hung over it like steam from a sweating horse.

"It is a sad sight," said the fourth beggar, waving his hand with the gesture of an orator. "Shakespeare was right when he said, 'God made the country and man made the town.' Admit for the present that cities are necessary evils. The time is coming when every man must have his country-place. Meanwhile let us cultivate the rural virtues."

He smacked his lips and lifted the flagon.

"Right," said the first beggar, "a toast! To the simple life!"

So the four quaffed a cupful of wine—and I a puff of smoke—to the simple life.

In the bush was a bird, very busy catching flies. He perched on a branch, darted into the air, caught his fly, and fluttered to another branch. Between flies he chirped and twittered cheerfully.

"Beautiful bird," said the first beggar, leaning back, "a model of cheerful industry! What do they call him!"

"A warbler," said I, "because he has so little voice."

"He might sing better," observed the second beggar, "if he did not work so hard catching flies."

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But the fourth beggar sighed and wiped the corner of his left eye, for he was a tender-hearted man on one side.

"I am thinking," said he, "of the poor flies!"

"Bet you a hundred to ten he doesn't catch the next one," said the third beggar.

"Done," cried the others, but before the stakes were counted out, the bird had flown.

"Tell me, sirs," I began, when they had stripped the gilded bands from their cigars and lighted them, "what it is that makes you all so innocently merry and contented in this troublous world?"

"It is a professional secret," said the first beggar. "If we tell it, you will give it away."

"Never," I answered. "I only want to put it into a poem."

The beggars looked at one another and laughed heartily. "That will do no harm," said they, "our secret will be safe there."

"Well, then," said the first beggar gravely, "It is religion. We approve the conduct of Providence. It must be all right. The Lord is on our side. It would be wicked to ask why. We practise the grace of resignation, and find peace."

"No," said the second beggar smiling, "religion is an old wives' tale. It is philosophy that makes us contented. Nothing could be unless it was, and nothing is different from what it has to be. Evolution goes on evolving all the time. So here we are, you see, in the best world possible at the present moment. Why not make the most of it? Pass me the flagon."

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"Not at all," interrupted the fourth beggar loudly, "I will have none of your selfish religion or your immoral philosophy. I am a Reformer. This is the worst world possible, and that is why I enjoy it. It gives me my chance to make orations about reform. Philanthropy is the secret of happiness."

"Piffle!" said the third beggar, tossing a gold coin in the air. "You talk as if people heard you. The secret of happiness—religion, philosophy, philanthropy?—poppycock! It is luck, sheer luck. Life is a game of chance. Heads I win, tails you lose. Will you match me, Master Poet?"

"You will have to excuse me," I said, "I have only a penny in my pocket. But I am still puzzled by your answers. You seem of many minds, but of one spirit. You are all equally contented. How is this?"

The eyes of the beggars turned to the piles of booty in front of them, and they all nodded their heads wisely as if to say, "you can see."

A packet of papers lay before the first beggar and his look lingered on them with love.

"How came you by these?" I asked.

"An old gentleman gave them to me," he answered. "He said he was my grandfather. He was an unpleasant old fellow, but God rest his soul! These are all gilt-edged."

The second beggar was playing with a heap of jewels. He was a handsome fellow with fine hands.

"How did you get these pretty things?" said I.

"By consenting to be married," he replied. "It was easy enough. She squints, and her grammar is defective, but she is a good little thing."

The third beggar ran his fingers through the pile of gold before him, and took up a coin, now and then, to flip it in the air.

"How did you earn this?" I asked.

"Earn it!" said he scornfully, "do you take me for a laboring man? These fellows here lent me something, and I bet on how much corn that fellow down there with the plough would raise—and the rest—why, the rest was luck, sheer luck!"

"And you?" I turned to the fourth beggar who had a huge bag beside him, so full of silver that the dimes and quarters ran from the mouth of it.

"I," said he loftily, "am a Reformer. The people love me and give me whatever I want, because I tell them that these other beggars have no right to their money. I am going to be President."

At this they all burst into shouts of laughter and rolled on the grass. Even the Reformer chuckled a little.

While they were laughing, the ploughman came up with an axe and began to chop at the bush.

"What are you doing to our bush?" cried the beggars.

"Chopping it down," said the ploughman.

"But why?" cried they.

"I must plough this field," said he.

So the beggars grabbed their spoils and scuttled away to other countries, and I went on over the hill.

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THE KEEPER of the JEWEL

THERE was an outcry at the door of the great hall, and suddenly a confusion arose. The guards ran thither swiftly, and the people were crowded together, pushing and thrusting as if to withhold some intruder. Out of the tumult came a strong voice shouting, "I will come in! I must see the false king!" But other voices cried, "Not so—he is mad—you shall not come in thus!"

Then the king said, "Let him come in as he will!"

So the confusion fell apart, and the hall was very still, and a man in battered armor stumbled through the silence and stood in front of the throne. He was breathing hard, for he was weary and angry and afraid, and the sobbing of his breath was like the pulse of a clock. But his anger was stronger than his weariness and his fear, so he lifted his eyes hardily and looked the king in the face.

It was like the face of a mountain, very calm and very high, but not unkind. When the man saw it clearly he knew that he was looking at the true king; but his anger was not quenched, and he stood stiff, with drawn brows, until the king said, "Speak!"

For answer the man drew from his breast a golden chain, at the end of which was a jewel set with a great blue stone. He looked at it for a moment with scorn, as one who had a grievance. Then he threw it down on the steps of the throne, and turned on his heel to go.

"Stay," said the king. "Whose is this jewel?"

"I thought it to be yours," said the man.

"Whence had you it?" asked the king.

"From an old servant of yours," answered the man. "He gave it to me when I was but a lad, and told me it came from the king—perfect and priceless. Therefore I must keep it as the apple of mine eye. No harm must come to it, nor any stain. None must take it away by fraud or force. I must carry it waking and sleeping, fight and fend for it, guard it with my life's blood, and bring it back to the king unbroken and untarnished."

"And you have done this?" said the king.

"Yes, and no," answered the man.

"Divide your answer," said the king. "First, the *yes*."

The man delayed a moment before he spoke. Then his words came slow and firm as if they were measured and weighed in his mind.

"All that man could do, O king, have I done to keep this jewel. Against open foes and secret robbers I have defended it, with faithful watching and hard fighting. Through storm and peril, through darkness and sorrow, through the temptation of pleasure and the bewilderment of riches, I have never parted from it. Gold could not buy it; passion could not force it; nor man nor woman could wile or win it away. Glad or sorry, well or wounded, at home or in exile, I have given my life to keep the jewel. This is the meaning of the *yes*."

"It is right," said the king. "And now the *no*."

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The man answered quickly and with heat.

"The *no* also is right, O king! But not by my fault. The jewel is not untarnished, not perfect. It never was. There is a flaw in it. I saw it first when I entered the light of your palace-gate. Look, it is marred and imperfect, a thing of little value. I have been deceived. You have claimed my life for a fool's errand, a thing of naught, no jewel, but a bauble. Take it. It is yours."

The king looked not at the gold chain and the blue stone, but at the face of the man. He looked quietly and kindly and steadily into the eyes full of pain and wounded loyalty, until they fell before his look. Then he spoke gently.

"Will you give me my jewel?"

The man lifted his eyes in wonder.

"It is there," he cried, "at your feet!"

"I spoke not of that," said the king, "but of your life, yourself."

"My life,"—said the man faltering, "what is that? Is it not ended?"

"It is begun," said the king. "Your life—yourself, what of that?"

"I had not thought of that," said the man, "only of the jewel, not of myself, my life."

"You may think of it now," said the king, "and think clearly. Have you not learned courage and hardiness? Have not your labors brought you strength; your perils, wisdom; your wounds, patience? Has not your task broken chains for you, and lifted you out of sloth and above fear? Are you not another man, braver, purer, because of it? Do you say that the stone that has done this for you is false, a thing of naught?"

"Is this true?" said the man trembling and sinking on his knee.

"It is true," answered the king, "as God lives, it is true. Come, stand at my right hand. My jewels that I seek are not dead, but alive. But the stone which led you here—look! has it a flaw?"

He stooped and lifted the jewel. The light of his face fell upon it. And in the blue depths of the sapphire the man saw a star.

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THE FLIGHT

By G. E. Woodberry

I

O Wild Heart, track the land's perfume,
  Beach-roses and moor-heather!
All fragrancies of herb and bloom
  Fail, out at sea, together.
O follow where aloft find room
  Lark-song and eagle-feather!
All ecstasies of throat and plume
  Melt, high on yon blue weather.

O leave on sky and ocean lost
  The flight creation dareth;
Take wings of love, that mount the most;
  Find fame, that furthest fareth!
Thy flight, albeit amid her host
  Thee, too, night star-like beareth,
Flying, thy breast on heaven's coast,
  The infinite outweareth.

II

"Dead o'er us roll celestial fires;
  Mute stand earth's ancient beaches;
Old thoughts, old instincts, old desires,
  The passing hour outreaches;
The soul creative never tires,—
  Evokes, adores, beseeches;
And that heart most the god inspires
  Whom most its wildness teaches.

"For I will course through falling years,
  And stars and cities burning;
And I will march through dying cheers
  Past empires unreturning;
Ever the world-flame reappears
  Where mankind power is earning,
The nations' hopes, the people's tears,
  One with the wild heart yearning."

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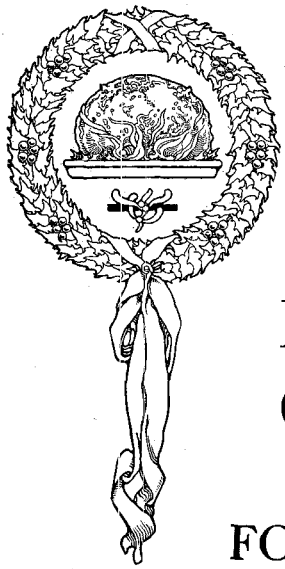

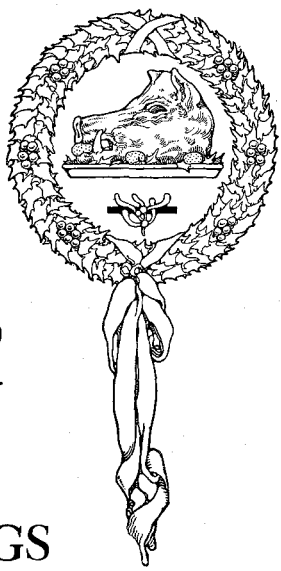

DICKENS'S CHILDREN

FOUR DRAWINGS

BY

JESSIE WILLCOX SMITH

PIP AND JOE GARGERY

"Great Expectations," Chapter II

"If you could cough any trifle on it up, Pip, I'd recommend you to do it," said Joe, all aghast. "Manners is manners, but still your elth's you elth."

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JENNY WREN, THE LITTLE DOLLS' DRESSMAKER

"Our Mutual Friend," Chapter I, Book Second

"Oh! I know their tricks and their manners."

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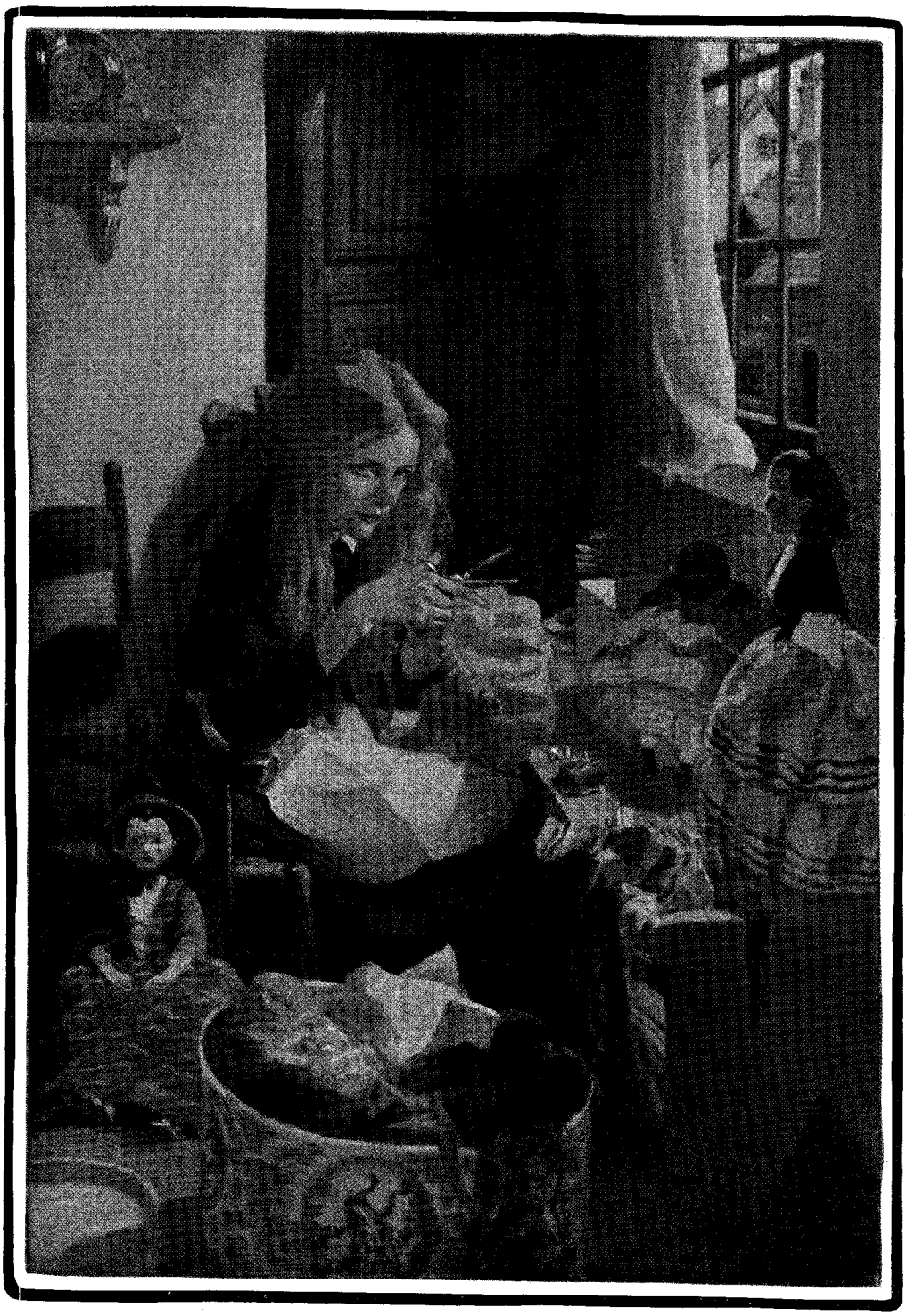

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OLIVER'S FIRST MEETING WITH THE ARTFUL DODGER

"Oliver Twist," Chapter VIII

"Hello, my covey! What's the row?" said this strange young gentleman to Oliver.

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MRS. KENWIGS AND THE FOUR LITTLE KENWIGSES

"Nicholas Nickleby," Chapter XIV

"Oh! they're too beautiful to live, much too beautiful!" sobbed Mrs. Kenwigs. On hearing this alarming presentiment . . . all four little girls raised a hideous cry, and burying their heads in their mother's lap simultaneously, screamed until the eight flaxen tails vibrated again.

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XINGU

By Edith Wharton

I

MRS. BALLINGER is one of the ladies who pursue Culture in bands, as though it were dangerous to meet alone. To this end she had founded the Lunch Club, an association composed of herself and several other indomitable huntresses of erudition. The Lunch Club, after three or four winters of lunching and debate, had acquired such local distinction that the entertainment of distinguished strangers became one of its accepted functions; in recognition of which it duly extended to the celebrated "Osric Dane," on the day of her arrival in Hillbridge, an invitation to be present at the next meeting.

The Club was to meet at Mrs. Ballinger's. The other members, behind her back, were of one voice in deploring her unwillingness to cede her rights in favor of Mrs. Plinth, whose house made a more impressive setting for the entertainment of celebrities; while, as Mrs. Leveret observed, there was always the picture-gallery to fall back on.

Mrs. Plinth made no secret of sharing this view. She had always regarded it as one of her obligations to entertain the Lunch Club's distinguished guests. Mrs. Plinth was almost as proud of her obligations as she was of her picture-gallery; she was in fact fond of implying that the one possession implied the other, and that only a woman of her wealth could afford to live up to a standard as high as that which she had set herself. An all-round sense of duty, roughly adaptable to various ends, was, in her opinion, all that Providence exacted of the more humbly stationed; but the power which had predestined Mrs. Plinth to keep footmen clearly intended her to maintain an equally specialized staff of responsibilities. It was the more to be regretted that Mrs. Ballinger, whose obligations to society were bounded by the narrow scope of two parlour-maids, should have been so tenacious of the right to entertain Osric Dane.

The question of that lady's reception had for a month past profoundly moved the members of the Lunch Club. It was not that they felt themselves unequal to the task, but that their sense of the opportunity plunged them into the agreeable uncertainty of the lady who weighs the alternatives of a well-stocked wardrobe. If such subsidiary members as Mrs. Leveret were fluttered by the thought of exchanging ideas with the author of "The Wings of Death," no forebodings of the kind disturbed the conscious adequacy of Mrs. Plinth, Mrs. Ballinger and Miss Van Vluyck. "The Wings of Death" had, in fact, at Miss Van Vluyck's suggestion, been chosen as the subject of discussion at the last club meeting, and each member had thus been enabled to express her own opinion or to appropriate whatever seemed most likely to be of use in the comments of the others. Mrs. Roby alone had abstained from profiting by the opportunity thus offered; but it was now openly recognised that, as a member of the Lunch Club, Mrs. Roby was a failure. "It all comes," as Miss Van Vluyck put it, "of accepting a woman on a man's estimation." Mrs. Roby, returning to Hillbridge from a prolonged sojourn in exotic regions—the other ladies no longer took the trouble to remember where—had been emphatically commended by the distinguished biologist, Professor Foreland, as the most agreeable woman he had ever met; and the members of the Lunch Club, awed by an encomium that carried the weight of a diploma, and rashly assuming that the Professor's social sympathies would follow the line of his scientific bent, had seized the chance of annexing a biological member. Their disillusionment was complete. At Miss Van Vluyck's first off-hand mention of the pterodactyl Mrs. Roby had confusedly murmured: "I know so little about metres—" and after that painful betrayal of incompetence she had prudently withdrawn from farther participation in the mental gymnastics of the club.

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"I suppose she flattered him," Miss Van Vluyck summed up—"or else it's the way she does her hair."

The dimensions of Miss Van Vluyck's dining-room having restricted the membership of the club to six, the non-conductiveness of one member was a serious obstacle to the exchange of ideas, and some wonder had already been expressed that Mrs. Roby should care to live, as it were, on the intellectual bounty of the others. This feeling was augmented by the discovery that she had not yet read "The Wings of Death." She owned to having heard the name of Osric Dane; but that—incredible as it appeared—was the extent of her acquaintance with the celebrated novelist. The ladies could not conceal their surprise, but Mrs. Ballinger, whose pride in the club made her wish to put even Mrs. Roby in the best possible light, gently insinuated that, though she had not had time to acquaint herself with "The Wings of Death," she must at least be familiar with its equally remarkable predecessor, "The Supreme Instant."

Mrs. Roby wrinkled her sunny brows in a conscientious effort of memory, as a result of which she recalled that, oh, yes, she *had* seen the book at her brother's, when she was staying with him in Brazil, and had even carried it off to read one day on a boating party; but they had all got to shying things at each other in the boat, and the book had gone overboard, so she had never had the chance—

The picture evoked by this anecdote did not advance Mrs. Roby's credit with the club, and there was a painful pause, which was broken by Mrs. Plinth's remarking: "I can understand that, with all your other pursuits, you should not find much time for reading; but I should have thought you might at least have *got up* 'The Wings of Death' before Osric Dane's arrival."

Mrs. Roby took this rebuke good-humouredly. She had meant, she owned, to glance through the book; but she had been so absorbed in a novel of Trollope's that——

"No one reads Trollope now," Mrs. Ballinger interrupted impatiently.

Mrs. Roby looked pained. "I'm only just beginning," she confessed.

"And does he interest you?" Mrs. Plinth enquired.

"He amuses me."

"Amusement," said Mrs. Plinth sententiously, "is hardly what I look for in my choice of books."

"Oh, certainly, 'The Wings of Death' is not amusing," ventured Mrs. Leveret, whose manner of putting forth an opinion was like that of an obliging salesman with a variety of other styles to submit if his first selection does not suit.

"Was it *meant* to be?" enquired Mrs. Plinth, who was fond of asking questions that she permitted no one but herself to answer. "Assuredly not."

"Assuredly not—that is what I was going to say," assented Mrs. Leveret, hastily rolling up her opinion and reaching for another. "It was meant to—to elevate."

Miss Van Vluyck adjusted her spectacles as though they were the black cap of condemnation. "I hardly see," she interposed, "how a book steeped in the bitterest pessimism can be said to elevate, however much it may instruct."

"I meant, of course, to instruct," said Mrs. Leveret, flurried by the unexpected distinction between two terms which she had supposed to be synonymous. Mrs. Leveret's enjoyment of the Lunch Club was frequently marred by such surprises; and not knowing her own value to the other ladies as a mirror for their mental complacency she was sometimes troubled by a doubt of her worthiness to join in their debates. It was only the fact of having a dull sister who thought her clever that saved her from a sense of hopeless inferiority.

"Do they get married in the end?" Mrs. Roby interposed.

"They—who?" the Lunch Club collectively exclaimed.

"Why, the girl and man. It's a novel, isn't it? I always think that's the one thing that matters. If they're parted it spoils my dinner."

Mrs. Plinth and Mrs. Ballinger exchanged scandalised glances, and the latter said: "I should hardly advise you to read 'The Wings of Death, in that spirit. For my part, when there are so many books that one *has* to read, I wonder how any one can find time for those that are merely amusing."

"The beautiful part of it," Laura Glyde murmured, "is surely just this—that no one can tell *how* 'The Wings of Death' ends.

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Osric Dane, overcome by the dread significance of her own meaning, has mercifully veiled it—perhaps even from herself—as Apelles, in representing the sacrifice of Iphigenia, veiled the face of Agamemnon."

"What's that? Is it poetry?" whispered Mrs. Leveret nervously to Mrs. Plinth, who, disdaining a definite reply, said coldly: "You should look it up. I always make it a point to look things up." Her tone added —"though I might easily have it done for me by the footman."

"I was about to say," Miss Van Vluyck resumed, "that it must always be a question whether a book *can* instruct unless it elevates."

"Oh—" murmured Mrs. Leveret, now feeling herself hopelessly astray.

"I don't know," said Mrs. Ballinger, scenting in Miss Van Vluyck's tone a tendency to depreciate the coveted distinction of entertaining Osric Dane; "I don't know that such a question can seriously be raised as to a book which has attracted more attention among thoughtful people than any novel since 'Robert Elsmere.'"

"Oh, but don't you see," exclaimed Laura Glyde, "that it's just the dark hopelessness of it all—the wonderful tone-scheme of black on black—that makes it such an artistic achievement? It reminded me so when I read it of Prince Rupert's *manière noire* . . . the book is etched, not painted, yet one feels the colour-values so intensely . . . "

"Who is *he?*" Mrs. Leveret whispered to her neighbour. "Some one she's met abroad?"

"The wonderful part of the book," Mrs. Ballinger conceded, "is that it may be looked at from so many points of view. I hear that as a study of determinism Professor Lupton ranks it with 'The Data of Ethics.'"

"I'm told that Osric Dane spent ten years in preparatory studies before beginning to write it," said Mrs. Plinth. "She looks up everything—verifies everything. It has always been my principle, as you know. Nothing would induce me, now, to put aside a book before I'd finished it, just because I can buy as many more as I want."

"And what do *you* think of 'The Wings of Death'?" Mrs. Roby abruptly asked her.

It was the kind of question that might be termed out of order, and the ladies glanced at each other as though disclaiming any share in such a breach of discipline. They all knew that there was nothing Mrs. Plinth so much disliked as being asked her opinion of a book. Books were written to read; if one read them what more could be expected? To be questioned in detail regarding the contents of a volume seemed to her as great an outrage as being searched for smuggled laces at the Custom House. The club had always respected this idiosyncrasy of Mrs. Plinth's. Such opinions as she had were imposing and substantial: her mind, like her house, was furnished with monumental "pieces" that were not meant to be suddenly disarranged; and it was one of the unwritten rules of the Lunch Club that, within her own province, each member's habits of thought should be respected. The meeting therefore closed with an increased sense, on the part of the other ladies, of Mrs. Roby's hopeless unfitness to be one of them.

II

MRS. LEVERET, on the eventful day, had arrived early at Mrs. Ballinger's, her volume of Appropriate Allusions in her pocket.

It always flustered Mrs. Leveret to be late at the Lunch Club: she liked to collect her thoughts and gather a hint, as the others assembled, of the turn the conversation was likely to take. To-day, however, she felt herself completely at a loss; and even the familiar contact of Appropriate Allusions, which stuck into her as she sat down, failed to give her any reassurance. It was an admirable little volume, compiled to meet all the social emergencies; so that, whether on the occasion of Anniversaries, joyful or melancholy (as the classification ran), of Banquets, social or municipal, or of Baptisms, Church of England or sectarian, its student need never be at a loss for a pertinent reference. Mrs. Leveret, though she had for years devoutly conned its pages, valued it, however, rather for its moral support than for its practical services; for though in the privacy of her own room she commanded an army of quotations, these invariably deserted her at the critical moment, and the only line she re-

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tained—*Canst thou draw out leviathan with a hook?*—was one she had never yet found the occasion to apply.

To-day she felt that even the complete mastery of the volume would hardly have insured her self-possession; for she thought it probable that, even if she *did*, in some miraculous way, remember an Allusion, it would be only to find that Osric Dane used a different volume (Mrs. Leveret was convinced that literary people always carried them), and would consequently not recognise her quotations.

Mrs. Leveret's sense of being adrift was intensified by the appearance of Mrs. Ballinger's drawing-room. To a careless eye its aspect was unchanged; but those acquainted with Mrs. Ballinger's way of arranging her books would instantly have detected the marks of recent perturbation. Mrs. Ballinger's province, as a member of the Lunch Club, was the Book of the Day. On that, whatever it was, from a novel to a treatise on experimental psychology, she was confidently, authoritatively "up." What became of last year's books, or last week's even; what she did with the "subjects" she had previously professed with equal authority; no one had ever yet discovered. Her mind was an hotel where facts came and went like transient lodgers, without leaving their address behind, and frequently without paying for their board. It was Mrs. Ballinger's boast that she was "abreast with the Thought of the Day," and her pride that this advanced position should be expressed by the books on her drawing-room table. These volumes, frequently renewed, and almost always damp from the press, bore names generally unfamiliar to Mrs. Leveret, and giving her, as she furtively scanned them, a disheartening glimpse of new fields of knowledge to be breathlessly traversed in Mrs. Ballinger's wake. But to-day a number of maturer-looking volumes were adroitly mingled with the *primeurs* of the press—Karl Marx jostled Professor Bergson, and the "Confessions of St. Augustine" lay beside the last work on "Mendelism"; so that even to Mrs. Leveret's fluttered perceptions it was clear that Mrs. Ballinger didn't in the least know what Osric Dane was likely to talk about, and had taken measures to be prepared for anything. Mrs. Leveret felt like a passenger on an ocean steamer who is told that there is no immediate danger, but that she had better put on her life-belt.

It was a relief to be roused from these forebodings by Miss Van Vluyck's arrival.

"Well, my dear," the new-comer briskly asked her hostess, "what subjects are we to discuss to-day?"

Mrs. Ballinger was furtively replacing a volume of Wordsworth by a copy of Verlaine. "I hardly know," she said somewhat nervously. "Perhaps we had better leave that to circumstances."

"Circumstances?" said Miss Van Vluyck drily. "That means, I suppose, that Laura Glyde will take the floor as usual, and we shall be deluged with literature."

Philanthropy and statistics were Miss Van Vluyck's province, and she naturally resented any tendency to divert their guest's attention from these topics.

Mrs. Plinth at this moment appeared.

"Literature?" she protested in a tone of remonstrance. "But this is perfectly unexpected. I understood we were to talk of Osric Dane's novel."

Mrs. Ballinger winced at the discrimination, but let it pass. "We can hardly make that our chief subject—at least not *too* intentionally," she suggested. "Of course we can let our talk *drift* in that direction; but we ought to have some other topic as an introduction, and that is what I wanted to consult you about. The fact is, we know so little of Osric Dane's tastes and interests that it is difficult to make any special preparation."

"It may be difficult," said Mrs. Plinth with decision, "but it is absolutely necessary. I know what that happy-go-lucky principle leads to. As I told one of my nieces the other day, there are certain emergencies for which a lady should always be prepared. It's in shocking taste to wear colours when one pays a visit of condolence, or a last year's dress when there are reports that one's husband is on the wrong side of the market; and so it is with conversation. All I ask is that I should know beforehand what is to be talked about; then I feel sure of being able to say the proper thing."

"I quite agree with you," Mrs. Ballinger anxiously assented; "but——"

And at that instant, heralded by the fluttered parlour-maid, Osric Dane appeared upon the threshold.

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Mrs. Leveret told her sister afterward that she had known at a glance what was coming. She saw that Osric Dane was not going to meet them half way. That distinguished personage had indeed entered with an air of compulsion not calculated to promote the easy exercise of hospitality. She looked as though she were about to be photographed for a new edition of her books.

The desire to propitiate a divinity is generally in inverse ratio to its responsiveness, and the sense of discouragement produced by Osric Dane's entrance visibly increased the Lunch Club's eagerness to please her. Any lingering idea that she might consider herself under an obligation to her entertainers was at once dispelled by her manner: as Mrs. Leveret said afterward to her sister, she had a way of looking at you that made you feel as if there was something wrong with your hat. This evidence of greatness produced such an immediate impression on the ladies that a shudder of awe ran through them when Mrs. Roby, as their hostess led the great personage into the dining-room, turned back to whisper to the others: "What a brute she is!"

The hour about the table did not tend to correct this verdict. It was passed by Osric Dane in the silent deglutition of Mrs. Ballinger's menu, and by the members of the Club in the emission of tentative platitudes which their guest seemed to swallow as perfunctorily as the successive courses of the luncheon.

Mrs. Ballinger's deplorable delay in fixing a topic had thrown the Club into a mental disarray which increased with the return to the drawing-room, where the actual business of discussion was to open. Each lady waited for the other to speak; and there was a general shock of disappointment when their hostess opened the conversation by the painfully commonplace inquiry: "Is this your first visit to Hillbridge?"

Even Mrs. Leveret was conscious that this was a bad beginning; and a vague impulse of deprecation made Miss Glyde interject: "It is a very small place indeed."

Mrs. Plinth bristled. "We have a great many representative people," she said, in the tone of one who speaks for her order.

Osric Dane turned to her thoughtfully. "What do they represent?" she asked.

Mrs. Plinth's constitutional dislike to being questioned was intensified by her sense of unpreparedness; and her reproachful glance passed the question on to Mrs. Ballinger.

"Why," said that lady, glancing in turn at the other members, "as a community I hope it is not too much to say that we stand for culture."

"For art—" Miss Glyde eagerly interjected.

"For art and literature," Mrs. Ballinger emended.

"And for sociology, I trust," snapped Miss Van Vluyck.

"We have a standard," said Mrs. Plinth, feeling herself suddenly secure on the vast expanse of a generalisation: and Mrs. Leveret, thinking there must be room for more than one on so broad a statement, took courage to murmur: "Oh, certainly; we have a standard."

"The object of our little club," Mrs. Ballinger continued, "is to concentrate the highest tendencies of Hillbridge—to centralise and focus its complex intellectual effort."

This was felt to be so happy that the ladies drew an almost audible breath of relief.

"We aspire," the President went on, "to stand for what is highest in art, literature and ethics."

Osric Dane again turned to her. "What ethics?" she asked.

A tremor of apprehension encircled the room. None of the ladies required any preparation to pronounce on a question of morals; but when they were called ethics it was different. The club, when fresh from the "Encyclopædia Britannica," the "Reader's Handbook" or Smith's "Classical Dictionary," could deal confidently with any subject; but when taken unawares it had been known to define agnosticism as a heresy of the Early Church and Professor Froude as a distinguished histologist; and such minor members as Mrs. Leveret still secretly regarded ethics as something vaguely pagan.

Even to Mrs. Ballinger, Osric Dane's question was unsettling, and there was a general sense of gratitude when Laura Glyde leaned forward to say, with her most sympathetic accent: "You must excuse us, Mrs. Dane, for not being able, just at

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present, to talk of anything but 'The Wings of Death.'"

"Yes," said Miss Van Vluyck, with a sudden resolve to carry the war into the enemy's camp. "We are so anxious to know the exact purpose you had in mind in writing your wonderful book."

"You will find," Mrs. Plinth interposed, "that we are not superficial readers."

"We are eager to hear from you," Miss Van Vluyck continued, "if the pessimistic tendency of the book is an expression of your own convictions or——"

"Or merely," Miss Glyde hastily thrust in, "a sombre background brushed in to throw your figures into more vivid relief. *Are* you not primarily plastic?"

"*I* have always maintained," Mrs. Ballinger interposed, "that you represent the purely objective method——"

Osric Dane helped herself critically to coffee. "How do you define objective?" she then inquired.

There was a flurried pause before Laura Glyde intensely murmured: "In reading *you* we don't define, we feel."

Osric Dane smiled. "The cerebellum," she remarked, "is not infrequently the seat of the literary emotions." And she took a second lump of sugar.

The sting that this remark was vaguely felt to conceal was almost neutralised by the satisfaction of being addressed in such technical language.

"Ah, the cerebellum," said Miss Van Vluyck complacently. "The Club took a course in psychology last winter."

"Which psychology?" asked Osric Dane.

There was an agonising pause, during which each member of the Club secretly deplored the distressing inefficiency of the others. Only Mrs. Roby went on placidly sipping her chartreuse. At last Mrs. Ballinger said, with an attempt at a high tone: "Well, really, you know, it was last year that we took psychology, and this winter we have been so absorbed in——"

She broke off, nervously trying to recall some of the Club's discussions; but her faculties seemed to be paralysed by the petrifying stare of Osric Dane. What *had* the club been absorbed in lately? Mrs. Ballinger, with a vague purpose of gaining time, repeated slowly: "We've been so intensely absorbed in——"

Mrs. Roby put down her liqueur glass and drew near the group with a smile.

"In Xingu?" she gently prompted.

A thrill ran through the other members. They exchanged confused glances, and then, with one accord, turned a gaze of mingled relief and interrogation on their unexpected rescuer. The expression of each denoted a different phase of the same emotion. Mrs. Plinth was the first to compose her features to an air of reassurance: after a moment's hasty adjustment her look almost implied that it was she who had given the word to Mrs. Ballinger.

"Xingu, of course!" exclaimed the latter with her accustomed promptness, while Miss Van Vluyck and Laura Glyde seemed to be plumbing the depths of memory, and Mrs. Leveret, feeling apprehensively for Appropriate Allusions, was somehow reassured by the uncomfortable pressure of its bulk against her person.

Osric Dane's change of countenance was no less striking than that of her entertainers. She too put down her coffee-cup, but with a look of distinct annoyance: she too wore, for a brief moment, what Mrs. Roby afterward described as the look of feeling for something in the back of her head; and before she could dissemble these momentary signs of weakness, Mrs. Roby, turning to her with a deferential smile, had said: "And we've been so hoping that today you would tell us just what you think of it."

Osric Dane received the homage of the smile as a matter of course; but the accompanying question obviously embarrassed her, and it became clear to her observers that she was not quick at shifting her facial scenery. It was as though her countenance had so long been set in an expression of unchallenged superiority that the muscles had stiffened, and refused to obey her orders.

"Xingu—" she murmured, as if seeking in her turn to gain time.

Mrs. Roby continued to press her. "Knowing how engrossing the subject is, you will understand how it happens that the Club has let everything else go to the wall for the moment. Since we took up Xingu I might almost say—were it not for your books—that nothing else seems to us worth remembering."

Osric Dane's stern features were darkened rather than lit up by an uneasy smile.

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"I am glad to hear there is one exception," she gave out between narrowed lips.

"Oh, of course," Mrs. Roby said prettily; "but as you have shown us that—so very naturally!—you don't care to talk about your own things, we really can't let you off from telling us exactly what you think about Xingu; especially," she added, with a persuasive smile, "as some people say that one of your last books was simply saturated with it."

It was an *it*, then—the assurance sped like fire through the parched minds of the other members. In their eagerness to gain the least little clue to Xingu they almost forgot the joy of assisting at the discomfiture of Mrs. Dane.

The latter reddened nervously under her antagonist's direct assault. "May I ask," she faltered out in an embarrassed tone, "to which of my books you refer?"

Mrs. Roby did not falter. "That's just what I want you to tell us; because, though I was present, I didn't actually take part."

"Present at what?" Mrs. Dane took her up; and for an instant the trembling members of the Lunch Club thought that the champion Providence had raised up for them had lost a point. But Mrs. Roby explained herself gaily: "At the discussion, of course. And so we're dreadfully anxious to know just how it was that you went into the Xingu."

There was a portentous pause, a silence so big with incalculable dangers that the members with one accord checked the words on their lips, like soldiers dropping their arms to watch a single combat between their leaders. Then Mrs. Dane gave expression to their inmost dread by saying sharply: "Ah—you say *the* Xingu, do you?"

Mrs. Roby smiled undauntedly. "It *is* a shade pedantic, isn't it? Personally, I always drop the article; but I don't know how the other members feel about it."

The other members looked as though they would willingly have dispensed with this deferential appeal to their opinion, and Mrs. Roby, after a bright glance about the group, went on: "They probably think, as I do, that nothing really matters except the thing itself—except Xingu."

No immediate reply seemed to occur to Mrs. Dane, and Mrs. Ballinger gathered courage to say: "Surely every one must feel that about Xingu."

Mrs. Plinth came to her support with a heavy murmur of assent, and Laura Glyde breathed emotionally: "I have known cases where it has changed a whole life."

"It has done me worlds of good," Mrs. Leveret interjected, seeming to herself to remember that she had either taken it or read it the winter before.

"Of course," Mrs. Roby admitted, "the difficulty is that one must give up so much time to it. It's very long."

"I can't imagine," said Miss Van Vluyck tartly, "grudging the time given to such a subject."

"And deep in places," Mrs. Roby pursued; (so then it was a book!) "And it isn't easy to skip."

"I never skip," said Mrs. Plinth dogmatically.

"Ah, it's dangerous to, in Xingu. Even at the start there are places where one can't. One must just wade through."

"I should hardly call it *wading*," said Mrs. Ballinger sarcastically.

Mrs. Roby sent her a look of interest. "Ah—you always found it went swimmingly?"

Mrs. Ballinger hesitated. "Of course there are difficult passages," she conceded modestly.

"Yes; some are not at all clear—even," Mrs. Roby added, "if one is familiar with the original."

"As I suppose you are?" Osric Dane interposed, suddenly fixing her with a look of challenge.

Mrs. Roby met it by a deprecating smile. "Oh, it's really not difficult up to a certain point; though some of the branches are very little known, and it's almost impossible to get at the source."

"Have you ever tried?" Mrs. Plinth enquired, still distrustful of Mrs. Roby's thoroughness.

Mrs. Roby was silent for a moment; then she replied with lowered lids: "No—but a friend of mine did; a very brilliant man; and he told me it was best for women—not to . . . "

A shudder ran around the room. Mrs. Leveret coughed so that the parlour-maid, who was handing the cigarettes, should not hear; Miss Van Vluyck's face took on a nauseated expression, and Mrs. Plinth

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looked as if she were passing some one she did not care to bow to. But the most remarkable result of Mrs. Roby's words was the effect they produced on the Lunch Club's distinguished guest. Osric Dane's impassive features suddenly melted to an expression of the warmest human sympathy, and edging her chair toward Mrs. Roby's she asked: "Did he really? And —did you find he was right?"

Mrs. Ballinger, in whom annoyance at Mrs. Roby's unwonted assumption of prominence was beginning to displace gratitude for the aid she had rendered, could not consent to her being allowed, by such dubious means, to monopolise the attention of their guest. If Osric Dane had not enough self-respect to resent Mrs. Roby's flippancy, at least the Lunch Club would do so in the person of its President.

Mrs. Ballinger laid her hand on Mrs. Roby's arm. "We must not forget," she said with a frigid amiability, "that absorbing as Xingu is to *us*, it may be less interesting to——"

"Oh, no, on the contrary, I assure you," Osric Dane energetically intervened.

"—to others," Mrs. Ballinger finished firmly; "and we must not allow our little meeting to end without persuading Mrs. Dane to say a few words to us on a subject which, to-day, is much more present in all our thoughts. I refer, of course, to 'The Wings of Death.'"

The other members, animated by various degrees of the same sentiment, and encouraged by the humanised mien of their redoubtable guest, repeated after Mrs. Ballinger: "Oh, yes, you really *must* talk to us a little about your book."

Osric Dane's expression became as bored, though not as haughty, as when her work had been previously mentioned. But before she could respond to Mrs. Ballinger's request, Mrs. Roby had risen from her seat, and was pulling her veil down over her frivolous nose.

"I'm so sorry," she said, advancing toward her hostess with outstretched hand, "but before Mrs. Dane begins I think I'd better run away. Unluckily, as you know, I haven't read her books, so I should be at a terrible disadvantage among you all; and besides, I've an engagement to play bridge."

If Mrs. Roby had simply pleaded her ignorance of Osric Dane's works as a reason for withdrawing, the Lunch Club, in view of her recent prowess, might have approved such evidence of discretion; but to couple this excuse with the brazen announcement that she was foregoing the privilege for the purpose of joining a bridge-party, was only one more instance of her deplorable lack of discrimination.

The ladies were disposed, however, to feel that her departure—now that she had performed the sole service she was ever likely to render them—would probably make for greater order and dignity in the impending discussion, besides relieving them of the sense of self-distrust which her presence always mysteriously produced. Mrs. Ballinger therefore restricted herself to a formal murmur of regret, and the other members were just grouping themselves comfortably about Osric Dane when the latter, to their dismay, started up from the sofa on which she had been deferentially enthroned.

"Oh wait—do wait, and I'll go with you!" she called out to Mrs. Roby; and, seizing the hands of the disconcerted members, she administered a series of farewell pressures with the mechanical haste of a railway-conductor punching tickets.

"I'm so sorry—I'd quite forgotten—" she flung back at them from the threshold; and as she joined Mrs. Roby, who had turned in surprise at her appeal, the other ladies had the mortification of hearing her say, in a voice which she did not take the pains to lower: "If you'll let me walk a little way with you, I should so like to ask you a few more questions about Xingu . . ."

III

THE incident had been so rapid that the door closed on the departing pair before the other members had had time to understand what was happening. Then a sense of the indignity put upon them by Osric Dane's unceremonious desertion began to contend with the confused feeling that they had been cheated out of their due without exactly knowing how or why.

There was an awkward silence, during which Mrs. Ballinger, with a perfunctory hand, rearranged the skilfully grouped literature at which her distinguished guest had not so much as glanced; then Miss Van Vluyck tartly pronounced: "Well, I

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can't say that I consider Osric Dane's departure a great loss."

This confession crystallised the fluid resentment of the other members, and Mrs. Leveret exclaimed: "I do believe she came on purpose to be nasty!"

It was Mrs. Plinth's private opinion that Osric Dane's attitude toward the Lunch Club might have been very different had it welcomed her in the majestic setting of the Plinth drawing-rooms; but not liking to reflect on the inadequacy of Mrs. Ballinger's establishment she sought a round-about satisfaction in depreciating her *savoir faire*.

"I said from the first that we ought to have had a subject ready. It's what always happens when you're unprepared. Now if we'd only got up Xingu——"

The slowness of Mrs. Plinth's mental processes was always allowed for by the Club; but this instance of it was too much for Mrs. Ballinger's equanimity.

"Xingu!" she scoffed. "Why, it was the fact of our knowing so much more about it than she did—unprepared though we were—that made Osric Dane so furious. I should have thought that was plain enough to everybody!"

This retort impressed even Mrs. Plinth, and Laura Glyde, moved by an impulse of generosity, said: "Yes, we really ought to be grateful to Mrs. Roby for introducing the topic. It may have made Osric Dane furious, but at least it made her civil."

"I am glad we were able to show her," added Miss Van Vluyck, "that a broad and up-to-date culture is not confined to the great intellectual centres."

This increased the satisfaction of the other members, and they began to forget their wrath against Osric Dane in the pleasure of having contributed to her defeat.

Miss Van Vluyck thoughtfully rubbed her spectacles. "What surprised me most," she continued, "was that Fanny Roby should be so up on Xingu."

This frank admission threw a slight chill on the company, but Mrs. Ballinger said with an air of indulgent irony: "Mrs. Roby always has the knack of making a little go a long way; still, we certainly owe her a debt for happening to remember that she'd heard of Xingu." And this was felt by the other members to be a graceful way of cancelling once for all the Club's obligation to Mrs. Roby.

Even Mrs. Leveret took courage to speed a timid shaft of irony: "I fancy Osric Dane hardly expected to take a lesson in Xingu at Hillbridge!"

Mrs. Ballinger smiled. "When she asked me what we represented—do you remember?—I wish I'd simply said we represented Xingu!"

All the ladies laughed appreciatively at this sally, except Mrs. Plinth, who said, after a moment's deliberation: "I'm not sure it would have been wise to do so."

Mrs. Ballinger, who was already beginning to feel as if she had launched at Osric Dane the retort which had just occurred to her, looked ironically at Mrs. Plinth. "May I ask why?" she enquired.

Mrs. Plinth looked grave. "Surely," she said, "I understood from Mrs. Roby herself that the subject was one it was as well not to go into too deeply?"

Miss Van Vluyck rejoined with precision: "I think that applied only to an investigation of the origin of the—of the—"; and suddenly she found that her usually accurate memory had failed her. "It's a part of the subject I never studied myself," she concluded lamely.

"Nor I," said Mrs. Ballinger.

Laura Glyde bent toward them with widened eyes. "And yet it seems—doesn't it?—the part that is fullest of an esoteric fascination?"

"I don't know on what you base that," said Miss Van Vluyck argumentatively.

"Well, didn't you notice how intensely interested Osric Dane became as soon as she heard what the brilliant foreigner—he *was* a foreigner, wasn't he?—had told Mrs. Roby about the origin—the origin of the rite—or whatever you call it?"

Mrs. Plinth looked disapproving, and Mrs. Ballinger visibly wavered. Then she said in a decisive tone: "It may not be desirable to touch on the—on that part of the subject in general conversation; but, from the importance it evidently has to a woman of Osric Dane's distinction, I feel as if we ought not to be afraid to discuss it among ourselves—without gloves—though with closed doors, if necessary."

"I'm quite of your opinion," Miss Van Vluyck came briskly to her support; "on

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condition, that is, that all grossness of language is avoided."

"Oh, I'm sure we shall understand without that," Mrs. Leveret tittered; and Laura Glyde added significantly: "I fancy we can read between the lines," while Mrs. Ballinger rose to assure herself that the doors were really closed.

Mrs. Plinth had not yet given her adhesion. "I hardly see," she began, "what benefit is to be derived from investigating such peculiar customs——"

But Mrs. Ballinger's patience had reached the extreme limit of tension. "This at least," she returned; "that we shall not be placed again in the humiliating position of finding ourselves less up on our own subjects than Fanny Roby!"

Even to Mrs. Plinth this argument was conclusive. She peered furtively about the room and lowered her commanding tones to ask: "Have you got a copy?"

"A—a copy?" stammered Mrs. Ballinger. She was aware that the other members were looking at her expectantly, and that this answer was inadequate, so she supported it by asking another question. "A copy of what?"

Her companions bent their expectant gaze on Mrs. Plinth, who, in turn, appeared less sure of herself than usual. "Why, of—of—the book," she explained.

"What book?" snapped Miss Van Vluyck, almost as sharply as Osric Dane.

Mrs. Ballinger looked at Laura Glyde, whose eyes were interrogatively fixed on Mrs. Leveret. The fact of being deferred to was so new to the latter that it filled her with an insane temerity. "Why, Xingu, of course!" she exclaimed.

A profound silence followed this direct challenge to the resources of Mrs. Ballinger's library, and the latter, after glancing nervously toward the Books of the Day, returned in a deprecating voice: "It's not a thing one cares to leave about."

"I should think *not*!" exclaimed Mrs. Plinth.

"It *is* a book, then?" said Miss Van Vluyck.

This again threw the company into disarray, and Mrs. Ballinger, with an impatient sigh, rejoined: "Why—there *is* a book—naturally . . . "

"Then why did Miss Glyde call it a religion?"

Laura Glyde started up. "A religion? I never——"

"Yes, you did," Miss Van Vluyck insisted; "you spoke of rites; and Mrs. Plinth said it was a custom."

Miss Glyde was evidently making a desperate effort to reinforce her statement; but accuracy of detail was not her strongest point. At length she began in a deep murmur: "Surely they used to do something of the kind at the Eleusinian mysteries——"

"Oh—" said Miss Van Vluyck, on the verge of disapproval; and Mrs. Plinth protested: "I understood there was to be no indelicacy!"

Mrs. Ballinger could not control her irritation. "Really, it is too bad that we should not be able to talk the matter over quietly among ourselves. Personally, I think that if one goes into Xingu at all——"

"Oh, so do I!" cried Miss Glyde.

"And I don't see how one can avoid doing so, if one wishes to keep up with the Thought of the Day——"

Mrs. Leveret uttered an exclamation of relief. "There—that's it!" she interposed.

"What's it?" the President curtly took her up.

"Why—it's a—a Thought: I mean a philosophy."

This seemed to bring a certain relief to Mrs. Ballinger and Laura Glyde, but Miss Van Vluyck said dogmatically: "Excuse me if I tell you that you're all mistaken. Xingu happens to be a language."

"A language!" the Lunch Club cried.

"Certainly. Don't you remember Fanny Roby's saying that there were several branches, and that some were hard to trace? What could that apply to but dialects?"

Mrs. Ballinger could no longer restrain a contemptuous laugh. "Really, if the Lunch Club has reached such a pass that it has to go to Fanny Roby for instruction on a subject like Xingu, it had almost better cease to exist!"

"It's really her fault for not being clearer," Laura Glyde put in.

"Oh, clearness and Fanny Roby!" Mrs. Ballinger shrugged. "I daresay we shall find she was mistaken on almost every point."

"Why not look it up?" said Mrs. Plinth.

As a rule this recurrent suggestion of Mrs. Plinth's was ignored in the heat of discus-

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sion, and only resorted to afterward in the privacy of each member's home. But on the present occasion the desire to ascribe their own confusion of thought to the vague and contradictory nature of Mrs. Roby's statements caused the members of the Lunch Club to utter a collective demand for a book of reference.

At this point the production of her treasured volume gave Mrs. Leveret, for a moment, the unusual experience of occupying the centre front; but she was not able to hold it long, for Appropriate Allusions contained no mention of Xingu.

"Oh, that's not the kind of thing we want!" exclaimed Miss Van Vluyck. She cast a disparaging glance over Mrs. Ballinger's assortment of literature, and added impatiently: "Haven't you any useful books?"

"Of course I have," replied Mrs. Ballinger indignantly; "but I keep them in my husband's dressing-room."

From this region, after some difficulty and delay, the parlour-maid produced the W–Z volume of an Encyclopædia and, in deference to the fact that the demand for it had come from Miss Van Vluyck, laid the ponderous tome before her.

There was a moment of painful suspense while Miss Van Vluyck rubbed her spectacles, adjusted them, and turned to Z; and a murmur of surprise when she said: "It isn't here."

"I suppose," said Mrs. Plinth, "it's not fit to be put in a book of reference."

"Oh, nonsense!" exclaimed Mrs. Ballinger. "Try X."

Miss Van Vluyck turned back through the volume, peering short-sightedly up and down the pages, till she came to a stop and remained motionless, like a dog on a point.

"Well, have you found it?" Mrs. Ballinger enquired, after a considerable delay.

"Yes. I've found it," said Miss Van Vluyck in a queer voice.

Mrs. Plinth hastily interposed: "I beg you won't read it aloud if there's anything offensive."

Miss Van Vluyck, without answering, continued her silent scrutiny.

"Well, what *is* it?" exclaimed Laura Glyde excitedly.

"*Do* tell us!" urged Mrs. Leveret, feeling that she would have something awful to tell her sister.

Miss Van Vluyck pushed the volume aside and turned slowly toward the expectant group.

"It's a river."

"A *river?*"

"Yes: in Brazil. Isn't that where she's been living?"

"Who? Fanny Roby? Oh, but you must be mistaken. You've been reading the wrong thing," Mrs. Ballinger exclaimed, leaning over her to seize the volume.

"It's the only *Xingu* in the Encyclopædia; and she *has* been living in Brazil," Miss Van Vluyck persisted.

"Yes: her brother has a consulship there," Mrs. Leveret eagerly interposed.

"But it's too ridiculous! I—we—why we *all* remember studying Xingu last year—or the year before last," Mrs. Ballinger stammered.

"I thought I did when *you* said so," Laura Glyde avowed.

"*I* said so?" cried Mrs. Ballinger.

"Yes. You said it had crowded everything else out of your mind."

"Well, *you* said it had changed your whole life!"

"For that matter, Miss Van Vluyck said she had never grudged the time she'd given it."

Mrs. Plinth interposed: "I made it clear that I knew nothing whatever of the original."

Mrs. Ballinger broke off the dispute with a groan. "Oh, what does it all matter if she's been making fools of us? I believe Miss Van Vluyck's right—she was talking of the river all the while!"

"How could she? It's too preposterous," Miss Glyde exclaimed.

"Listen." Miss Van Vluyck had repossessed herself of the Encyclopædia, and restored her spectacles to a nose reddened by excitement. "'The Xingu, one of the principal rivers of Brazil, rises on the plateau of Mato Grosso, and flows in a northerly direction for a length of no less than one thousand one hundred and eighteen miles, entering the Amazon near the mouth of the latter river. The upper course of the Xingu is auriferous and fed by numerous branches. Its source was first discovered in 1884 by the German explorer von den Steinen, after a difficult and dangerous expedition through a region in-

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habited by tribes still in the Stone Age of culture.' "

The ladies received this communication in a state of stupefied silence from which Mrs. Leveret was the first to rally. "She certainly *did* speak of its having branches."

The word seemed to snap the last thread of their incredulity. "And of its great length," gasped Mrs. Ballinger.

"She said it was awfully deep, and you couldn't skip—you just had to wade through," Miss Glyde subjoined.

The idea worked its way more slowly through Mrs. Plinth's compact resistances. "How could there be anything improper about a river?" she inquired.

"Improper?"

"Why, what she said about the source—that it was corrupt?"

"Not corrupt, but hard to get at," Laura Glyde corrected. "Some one who'd been there had told her so. I daresay it was the explorer himself—doesn't it say the expedition was dangerous?"

" 'Difficult and dangerous,' " read Miss Van Vluyck.

Mrs. Ballinger pressed her hands to her throbbing temples. "There's nothing she said that wouldn't apply to a river—to this river!" She swung about excitedly to the other members. "Why, do you remember her telling us that she hadn't read 'The Supreme Instant' because she'd taken it on a boating party while she was staying with her brother, and some one had 'shied' it overboard—'shied' of course was her own expression?"

The ladies breathlessly signified that the expression had not escaped them.

"Well—and then didn't she tell Osric Dane that one of her books was simply saturated with Xingu? Of course it was, if some of Mrs. Roby's rowdy friends had thrown it into the river!"

This surprising reconstruction of the scene in which they had just participated left the members of the Lunch Club inarticulate. At length Mrs. Plinth, after visibly labouring with the problem, said in a heavy tone: "Osric Dane was taken in too."

Mrs. Leveret took courage at this. "Perhaps that's what Mrs. Roby did it for. She said Osric Dane was a brute, and she may have wanted to give her a lesson."

Miss Van Vluyck frowned. "It was hardly worth while to do it at our expense."

"At least," said Miss Glyde with a touch of bitterness, "she succeeded in interesting her, which was more than we did."

"What chance had we?" rejoined Mrs. Ballinger. "Mrs. Roby monopolised her from the first. And *that*, I've no doubt, was her purpose—to give Osric Dane a false impression of her own standing in the Club. She would hesitate at nothing to attract attention: we all know how she took in poor Professor Foreland."

"She actually makes him give bridge-teas every Thursday," Mrs. Leveret piped up.

Laura Glyde struck her hands together. "Why, this is Thursday, and it's *there* she's gone, of course; and taken Osric with her!"

"And they're shrieking over us at this moment," said Mrs. Ballinger between her teeth.

This possibility seemed too preposterous to be admitted. "She would hardly dare," said Miss Van Vluyck, "confess the imposture to Osric Dane."

"I'm not so sure: I thought I saw her make a sign as she left. If she hadn't made a sign, why should Osric Dane have rushed out after her?"

"Well, you know, we'd all been telling her how wonderful Xingu was, and she said she wanted to find out more about it," Mrs. Leveret said, with a tardy impulse of justice to the absent.

This reminder, far from mitigating the wrath of the other members, gave it a stronger impetus.

"Yes—and that's exactly what they're both laughing over now," said Laura Glyde ironically.

Mrs. Plinth stood up and gathered her expensive furs about her monumental form. "I have no wish to criticise," she said; "but unless the Lunch Club can protect its members against the recurrence of such—such unbecoming scenes, I for one——"

"Oh, so do I!" agreed Miss Glyde, rising also.

Miss Van Vluyck closed the Encyclopædia and proceeded to button herself into her jacket. "My time is really too valuable—" she began.

"I fancy we are all of one mind," said Mrs. Ballinger, looking searchingly at Mrs. Leveret, who looked at the others.

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"I always deprecate anything like a scandal—" Mrs. Plinth continued.

"She has been the cause of one to-day!" exclaimed Miss Glyde.

Mrs. Leveret moaned: "I don't see how she *could!*" and Miss Van Vluyck said, picking up her note-book: "Some women stop at nothing."

"—but if," Mrs. Plinth took up her argument impressively, "anything of the kind had happened in *my* house" (it never would have, her tone implied), "I should have felt that I owed it to myself either to ask for Mrs. Roby's resignation—or to offer mine."

"Oh, Mrs. Plinth—" gasped the Lunch Club.

"Fortunately for me," Mrs. Plinth continued with an awful magnanimity, "the matter was taken out of my hands by our President's decision that the right to entertain distinguished guests was a privilege vested in her office; and I think the other members will agree that, as she was alone in this opinion, she ought to be alone in deciding on the best way of effacing its—its really deplorable consequences."

A deep silence followed this unexpected outbreak of Mrs Plinth's long-stored resentment.

"I don't see why *I* should be expected to ask her to resign—" Mrs. Ballinger at length began; but Laura Glyde turned back to remind her: "You know she made you say that you'd got on swimmingly in Xingu."

An ill-timed giggle escaped from Mrs. Leveret, and Mrs. Ballinger energetically continued "—but you needn't think for a moment that I'm afraid to!"

The door of the drawing-room closed on the retreating backs of the Lunch Club, and the President of that distinguished association, seating herself at her writing-table, and pushing away a copy of "The Wings of Death" to make room for her elbow, drew forth a sheet of the club's note-paper, on which she began to write: "My dear Mrs. Roby——"

THE WINDOW

By Susan Dyer

In truth, a lonely prisoner I must dwell.
Not mine to gauge the glory of the sun,—
To plot the course my destiny shall run!
Nor from the twilight of this tiny cell
Of individuality, may I tell
Aught of my fellow-captives. Though their call
Comes faint and pleading through the dividing wall,
'Tis but a cry from lips invisible.

Yet has mine unknown Warden granted me
One little window, where the free wind flings
Sweet, vernal promises! Beyond its bars
I look to vergeless distances, and see
A radiant West,—the flash of homing wings,—
The lofty, tolerant laughter of the stars!

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THE INVASION OF ENGLAND

By Richard Harding Davis

ILLUSTRATIONS BY WALLACE MORGAN

THIS is the true, inside story of the invasion of England in 1911, by the Germans, and why it failed. I got my data from Baron von Gottlieb, at the time military attaché of the German Government with the Russian army in the second Russian-Japanese War, when Russia drove Japan out of Manchuria, and reduced her to a third-rate power. He told me of his part in the invasion as we sat, after the bombardment of Tokio, on the ramparts of the Emperor's palace, watching the walls of the paper houses below us glowing and smoking like the ashes of a prairie fire.

Two years before, at the time of the invasion, von Gottlieb had been Carl Schultz, the head-waiter at the East Cliff Hotel at Cromer, and a spy.

The other end of the story came to me through Lester Ford, the London correspondent of the *New York Republic*. They gave me permission to tell it in any fashion I pleased, and it is here set down for the first time.

In telling the story, my conscience is not in the least disturbed, for I have yet to find any one who will believe it.

What led directly to the invasion was that some week-end guest of the East Cliff Hotel left a copy of "The Riddle of the Sands" in the coffee-room, where von Gottlieb found it; and the fact that Ford attended the Shakespeare Ball. Had neither of these events taken place, the German flag might now be flying over Buckingham Palace. And, then again, it might not.

As every German knows, "The Riddle of the Sands" is a novel written by a very clever Englishman in which is disclosed a plan for the invasion of his country. According to this plan an army of infantry was to be embarked in lighters, towed by shallow-draft, sea-going tugs, and despatched simultaneously from the seven rivers that form the Frisian Isles. From there they were to be convoyed by battle-ships two hundred and forty miles through the North Sea, and thrown upon the coast of Norfolk somewhere between the Wash and Mundesley. The fact that this coast is low-lying and bordered by sand flats which at low water are dry, that England maintains no North Sea squadron, and that her nearest naval base is at Chatham, seem to point to it as the spot best adapted for such a raid.

What von Gottlieb thought was evidenced by the fact that as soon as he read the book he mailed it to the German Ambassador in London, and under separate cover sent him a letter. In this he said: "I suggest your Excellency brings this book to the notice of a certain royal personage, and of the Strategy Board. General Bolivar said, 'When you want arms, take them from the enemy.' Does not this also follow when you want ideas?"

What the Strategy Board thought of the plan is a matter of history. This was in 1910. A year later, during the coronation week, Lester Ford went to Clarkson's to rent a monk's robe in which to appear at the Shakespeare Ball, and while the assistant departed in search of the robe, Ford was left alone in a small room hung with full-length mirrors and shelves, and packed with the uniforms that Clarkson rents for Covent Garden balls and amateur theatricals. While waiting, Ford gratified a long, secretly cherished desire to behold himself as a military man, by trying on all the uniforms on the lower shelves; and as a result, when the assistant returned, instead of finding a young American in English clothes and a high hat, he was confronted by a German officer in a spiked helmet fighting a duel with himself in the mirror. The assistant retreated precipitately, and Ford, conscious that he appeared ridiculous, tried to turn the tables by saying, "Does a German uniform always affect a Territorial like that?"

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The assistant laughed good-naturedly.

"It did give me quite a turn," he said. "It's this talk of invasion, I fancy. But for a fact, sir, if I was a Coast Guard, and you come along the beach dressed like that, I'd take a shot at you, just on the chance, anyway."

"And, quite right, too!" said Ford.

He was wondering when the invasion *did* come whether he would stick at his post in London and dutifully forward the news to his paper, or play truant and as a war correspondent watch the news in the making. So the words of Mr. Clarkson's assistant did not sink in. But a few weeks later young Major Bellew recalled them. Bellew was giving a dinner on the terrace of the Savoy Restaurant. His guests were his nephew, young Herbert, who was only five years younger than his uncle, and Herbert's friend Birrell, an Irishman, both in their third term at the University. After five years' service in India, Bellew had spent the last "Eights" week at Oxford, and was complaining bitterly that since his day the undergraduate had deteriorated. He had found him serious, given to study, far too well behaved. Instead of Jorrocks, he read Galsworthy; instead of "wines" he found pleasure in debating clubs where he discussed socialism. Ragging, practical jokes, ingenious hoaxes, that once were wont to set England in a roar, were a lost art. His undergraduate guests combated these charges fiercely. His criticisms they declared unjust and without intelligence.

"You're talking rot!" said his dutiful nephew. "Take Phil here, for example. I've roomed with him three years and I can testify that he has never opened a book. He never heard of Galsworthy until you spoke of him. And you can see for yourself his table manners are quite as bad as yours!"

"Worse!" assented Birrell loyally.

"And as for ragging! What rags, in your day, were as good as ours; as the Carrie Nation rag, for instance, when five hundred people sat through a temperance lecture and never guessed they were listening to a man from Balliol?"

"And the Abyssinian Ambassador rag!" cried Herbert. "What price that? When the *Dreadnought* manned the yards for him and gave him seventeen guns. That was an Oxford rag, and carried through by Oxford men. The country hasn't stopped laughing yet. *You* give us a rag!" challenged Herbert. "Make it as hard as you like; something risky, something that will make the country sit up, something that will send us all to jail, and Phil and I will put it through whether it takes one man or a dozen. Go on," he persisted, "and I bet we can get fifty volunteers right here in town and all of them undergraduates."

"Give you the idea, yes!" mocked Bellew, trying to gain time. "That's just what I say. You boys to-day are so dull. You lack initiative. It's the *idea* that counts. Anybody can do the acting. That's just amateur theatricals!"

"Is it!" snorted Herbert. "If you want to know what stage fright is, just go on board a British battle-ship with your face covered with burnt cork and insist on being treated like an ambassador. You'll find it's a little different from a first night with the Simla Thespians!"

Ford had no part in the debate. He had been smoking comfortably and with well-timed nods, impartially encouraging each disputant. But now he suddenly laid his cigar upon his plate, and, after glancing quickly about him, leaned eagerly forward. They were at the corner table of the terrace, and, as it was now past nine o'clock, the other diners had departed to the theatres and they were quite alone. Below them, outside the open windows, were the trees of the embankment, and beyond, the Thames, blocked to the west by the great shadows of the Houses of Parliament, lit only by the flame in the tower that showed the Lower House was still sitting.

"*I'll* give you an idea for a rag," whispered Ford. "You want one that is risky, that will make the country sit up, and that ought to land you in jail? Have you read 'The Riddle of the Sands?'"

Bellew and Herbert nodded; Birrell made no sign.

"Don't mind him," exclaimed Herbert impatiently. "*He* never reads anything! Go on!"

"It's the book most talked about," explained Ford. "And what else is most talked about?" He answered his own question. "The landing of the Germans in Morocco and the chance of war. Now, I ask you, with that book in everybody's mind and the war scare in everybody's

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mind, what would happen if German soldiers appeared to-night on the Norfolk coast just where the book says they will appear? Not *one* soldier, but dozens of soldiers; not in one place, but in twenty places?"

"What would happen?" roared Major Bellew loyally. "The Boy Scouts would fall out of bed and kick them into the sea!"

"Shut up!" snapped his nephew irreverently. He shook Ford by the arm. "How?" he demanded breathlessly. "How are we to do it? It would take hundreds of men."

"Two men," corrected Ford, "and a third man to drive the car. I thought it out one day at Clarkson's when I came across a lot of German uniforms. I thought of it as a newspaper story, as a trick to find out how prepared you people are to meet invasion. And when you said just now that you wanted a chance to go to jail——"

"What's your plan?" interrupted Birrell.

"We would start just before dawn—" began Ford.

"*We?*" demanded Herbert, "Are *you* in this?"

"Am *I* in it?" cried Ford indignantly. "It's my own private invasion! I'm letting you boys in on the ground floor. If I don't go, there won't be any invasion!"

The two pink-cheeked youths glanced at each other inquiringly and then nodded.

"We accept your services, sir," said Birrell gravely. "What's your plan?"

In astonishment Major Bellew glanced from one to the other and then slapped the table with his open palm. His voice shook with righteous indignation.

"Of all the preposterous, outrageous—Are you mad?" he demanded. "Do you suppose for one minute I will allow——"

His nephew shrugged his shoulders and, rising, pushed back his chair.

"Oh, you go to the devil!" he exclaimed cheerfully. "Come on, Ford," he said. "We'll find some place where uncle can't hear us."

Two days later a touring car carrying three young men, in the twenty-one miles between Wells and Cromer, broke down eleven times. Each time this misfortune befell them one young man scattered tools in the road and on his knees hammered ostentatiously at the tin hood; the other two occupants of the car sauntered to the beach. There they chucked pebbles at the waves and then slowly retraced their steps. Each time the route by which they returned was different from the one by which they had set forth. Sometimes they followed the beaten path down the cliff or, as it chanced to be, across the marshes; sometimes they slid down the face of the cliff; sometimes they lost themselves behind the hedges and in the lanes of the villages. But when they again reached the car the procedure of each was alike—each produced a pencil and on the face of his "Half Inch" road map traced strange, fantastic signs.

At lunch-time they stopped at the East Cliff Hotel at Cromer and made numerous and trivial inquiries about the Cromer golf links. They had come, they volunteered, from Ely for a day of sea-bathing and golf; they were returning after dinner. The head-waiter of the East Cliff Hotel gave them the information they desired. He was an intelligent head-waiter, young, and of pleasant, not to say distinguished, bearing. In a frock coat he might easily have been mistaken for something even more important than a head-waiter—for a German riding-master, a leader of a Hungarian band, a manager of a Ritz hotel. But he was not above his station. He even assisted the porter in carrying the coats and golf bags of the gentlemen from the car to the coffee-room where, with the intuition of the homing pigeon, the three strangers had, unaided, found their way. As Carl Schultz followed, carrying the dust coats, a road map fell from the pocket of one of them to the floor. Carl Schultz picked it up, and was about to replace it, when his eyes were held by notes scrawled roughly in pencil. With an expression that no longer was that of a head-waiter, Carl cast one swift glance about him and then slipped into the empty coat-room and locked the door. Five minutes later, with a smile that played uneasily over a face grown gray with anxiety, Carl presented the map to the tallest of the three strangers. It was open so that the pencil marks were most obvious. By his accent it was evident the tallest of the three strangers was an American.

"What the devil!" he protested; "which of you boys has been playing hob with my map?"

For just an instant the two pink-cheeked ones regarded him with disfavor; until, for

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just an instant, his eyebrows rose and, with a glance, he signified the waiter.

"Oh, *that!*" exclaimed the younger one. "The Automobile Club asked us to mark down petrol stations. Those marks mean that's where you can buy petrol."

The head-waiter breathed deeply. With an assured and happy countenance, he departed and, for the two-hundredth time that day, looked from the windows of the dining-room out over the tumbling breakers to the gray stretch of sea. As though fearful that his face would expose his secret, he glanced carefully about him and then, assured he was alone, leaned eagerly forward, scanning the empty tossing waters.

In his mind's eye he beheld rolling tugboats straining against long lines of scows, against the dead weight of field-guns, against the pull of thousands of motionless silent figures, each in khaki, each in a black leather helmet, each with one hundred and fifty rounds.

In his own language Carl Schultz reproved himself.

"Patience," he muttered; "patience! By ten to-night all will be dark. There will be no stars. There will be no moon. The very heavens fight for us, and by sunrise our outposts will be twenty miles inland!"

At lunch-time Carl Schultz carefully, obsequiously waited upon the three strangers. He gave them their choice of soup, thick or clear, of gooseberry pie or Half-Pay pudding. He accepted their shillings gratefully, and when they departed for the links he bowed them on their way. And as their car turned up Jetty Street, for one instant, he again allowed his eyes to sweep the dull gray ocean. Brown-sailed fishing-boats were beating in toward Cromer. On the horizon line a Norwegian tramp was drawing a lengthening scarf of smoke. Save for these the sea was empty.

By gracious permission of the manageress Carl had obtained an afternoon off, and, changing his coat, he mounted his bicycle and set forth toward Overstrand. On his way he nodded to the local constable, to the postman on his rounds, to the driver of the *char à banc*. He had been a year in Cromer and was well known and well liked.

Three miles from Cromer, at the top of the highest hill in Overstrand, the chimneys of a house showed above the thick tangle of fir trees. Between the trees and the road rose a wall, high, compact, forbidding. Carl opened the gate in the wall and pushed his bicycle up a winding path hemmed in by bushes. At the sound of his feet on the gravel, the bushes flew apart, and a man sprang into the walk and confronted him. But, at sight of the head-waiter, the legs of the man became rigid, his heels clicked together, his hand went sharply to his visor.

Behind the house, surrounded on every side by trees, was a tiny lawn. In the centre of the lawn, where once had been a tennis court, there now stood a slim mast. From this mast dangled tiny wires that ran to a kitchen table. On the table, its brass work shining in the sun, was a new and perfectly good wireless outfit, and beside it, with his hand on the key, was a heavily built, heavily bearded German. In his turn, Carl drew his legs together, his heels clicked, his hand stuck to his visor.

"I have been in constant communication," said the man with the beard. "They will be here just before the dawn. Return to Cromer and openly from the post-office telegraph your cousin in London: 'Will meet you to-morrow at the Crystal Palace.' On receipt of that, in the last edition of all of this afternoon's papers, he will insert the final advertisement. Thirty thousand of our own people will read it. They will know the moment has come!"

As Carl coasted back to Cromer he flashed past many pretty gardens where, upon the lawns, men in flannels were busy at tennis or, with pretty ladies, deeply occupied in drinking tea. Carl smiled grimly. High above him on the sky-line of the cliff he saw the three strangers he had served at luncheon. They were driving before them three innocuous golf balls.

"A nation of wasters," muttered the German, "sleeping at their posts. They are fiddling while England falls!"

Mr. Shutliffe, of Stiffkey, had led his cow in from the marsh, and was about to close the cow-barn door, when three soldiers appeared suddenly around the wall of the village church. They ran directly toward him. It was nine o'clock, but the twilight still held. The uniforms the men wore were unfamiliar, but in his day Mr. Shut-

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Drawn by Wallace Morgan.

He was confronted by a German officer in a spiked helmet fighting a duel with himself in the mirror.—Page 697.

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liffe had seen many uniforms, and to him all uniforms looked alike. The tallest soldier snapped at Mr. Shutliffe fiercely in a strange tongue.

"Du bist gefangen!" he announced. "Das Dorf ist besetzt. Wo sind unsere Leute?" he demanded.

"You'll 'ave to excuse me, sir," said Mr. Shutliffe, "but I am a trifle 'ard of 'earing."

The soldier addressed him in English.

"What is the name of this village?" he demanded.

Mr. Shutliffe having lived in the village upwards of eighty years, recalled its name with difficulty.

"Have you seen any of our people?"

With another painful effort of memory Mr. Shutliffe shook his head.

"Go indoors!" commanded the soldier, "and put out all lights, and remain indoors. We have taken this village. We are Germans. *You* are a prisoner! Do you understand?"

"Yes, sir, thank'ee, sir, kindly," stammered Mr. Shutliffe. "May I lock in the pigs first, sir?"

One of the soldiers coughed explosively, and ran away, and the two others trotted after him. When they looked back, Mr. Shutliffe was still standing uncertainly in the dusk, mildly concerned as to whether he should lock up the pigs or obey the German gentleman.

The three soldiers halted behind the church wall.

"That was a fine start!" mocked Herbert. "Of *course*, you had to pick out the Village Idiot. If they are all going to take it like that, we had better pack up and go home."

"The village inn is still open," said Ford. "We will close it."

They entered with fixed bayonets and dropped the butts of their rifles on the sanded floor. A man in gaiters choked over his ale and two fishermen removed their clay pipes and stared. The bar-maid alone arose to the occasion.

"Now, then," she exclaimed briskly, "what way is that to come tumbling into a respectable place? None of your tea-garden tricks in here young fellow, my lad, or——"

The tallest of the three intruders, in deep guttural accents, interrupted her sharply.

"We are Germans!" he declared. "This village is captured. You are prisoners of war. Those lights you will out put, and yourselves lock in. If you into the street go, we will shoot!"

He gave a command in a strange language; so strange indeed, that the soldiers with him failed to entirely grasp his meaning, and one shouldered his rifle, while the other brought his politely to a salute.

"You ass!" muttered the tall German. "Get out!"

As they charged into the street, they heard behind them a wild feminine shriek, then a crash of pottery and glass, then silence, and an instant later the Ship Inn was buried in darkness.

"That will hold Stiffkey for a while!" said Ford. "Now, back to the car."

But between them and the car loomed suddenly a tall and impressive figure. His helmet and his measured tread upon the deserted cobble-stones proclaimed his calling.

"The constable!" whispered Herbert. "He must *see* us, but he mustn't speak to us."

For a moment the three men showed themselves in the middle of the street, and then, as though at sight of the policeman they had taken alarm, disappeared through an opening between two houses. Five minutes later a motor car with its canvas top concealing its occupants rode slowly into Stiffkey's main street and halted before the constable. The driver of the car wore a leather skull-cap and goggles. From his neck to his heels he was covered by a rain-coat.

"Mr. Policeman," he began; "when I turned in here three soldiers stepped in front of my car and pointed rifles at me. Then they ran off toward the beach. What's the idea—manœuvres? Because, they've no right to——"

"Yes, sir," the policeman assured him promptly; "I saw them. It's manœuvres, sir. Territorials."

"They didn't look like Territorials," objected the chauffeur. "Looked to me like Germans."

Protected by the deepening dusk, the constable made no effort to conceal a grin.

"Just Territorials, sir," he protested soothingly; "maybe skylarking, but meaning no harm. Still, I'll have a look round, and warn 'em."

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Drawn by Wallace Morgan.

"We are Germans!" he declared. "This village is captured. You are prisoners of war".—Page 702.

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A voice from beneath the canvas top broke in angrily:

"I tell you, they were Germans. It's either a silly joke, or it's serious, and you ought to report it. It's your duty to warn the Coast Guard."

The constable considered deeply.

"I wouldn't take it on myself to wake the Coast Guard," he protested; "not at this time of the night. But if any Germans been annoying you gentlemen, and you wish to lodge a complaint against them, you give me your cards——"

"Ye Gods!" cried the man in the rear of the car. "Go on!" he commanded.

As the car sped out of Stiffkey, Herbert exclaimed with disgust:

"What's the use!" he protested. "You couldn't wake these people with dynamite! I vote we chuck it and go home."

"They little know of England who only Stiffkey know," chanted the chauffeur reprovingly. "Why, we haven't begun yet. Wait till we meet a live wire!"

Two miles further along the road to Cromer, young Bradshaw, the job-master's son at Blakeney, was leading his bicycle up the hill. Ahead of him something heavy flopped from the bank into the road, and in the light of his acetylene lamp he saw a soldier. The soldier dodged across the road and scrambled through the hedge on the bank opposite. He was followed by another soldier, and then by a third. The last man halted.

"Put out that light," he commanded. "Go to your home and tell no one what you have seen. If you attempt to give an alarm you will be shot. Our sentries are placed every fifty yards along this road."

The soldier disappeared from in front of the ray of light and followed his comrades, and an instant later young Bradshaw heard them sliding over the cliff's edge and the pebbles clattering to the beach below. Young Bradshaw stood quite still. In his heart was much fear—fear of laughter, of ridicule, of failure. But of no other kind of fear. Softly, silently he turned his bicycle so that it faced down the long hill he had just climbed. Then he snapped off the light. He had been reliably informed that in ambush at every fifty yards along the road to Blakeney, sentries were waiting to fire on him. And he proposed to run the gauntlet. He saw that it was for this moment that, first as a volunteer and later as a Territorial, he had drilled in the town hall, practiced on the rifle range, and in mixed manœuvres slept in six inches of mud. As he threw his leg across his bicycle, Herbert, from the motor car further up the hill, fired two shots over his head. These, he explained to Ford, were intended to give "verisimilitude to an otherwise bald and unconvincing narrative." And the sighing of the bullets gave young Bradshaw exactly what he wanted—the assurance that he was not the victim of a practical joke. He threw his weight forward and, lifting his feet, coasted down hill at forty miles an hour into the main street of Blakeney. Ten minutes later, when the car followed, a mob of men so completely blocked the water-front that Ford was forced to stop. His head-lights illuminated hundreds of faces, anxious, sceptical, eager. A gentleman with a white mustache and a look of a retired army officer pushed his way toward Ford, the crowd making room for him, and then closing in his wake.

"Have you seen any—any soldiers?" he demanded.

"German soldiers!" Ford answered. "They tried to catch us, but when I saw who they were, I ran through them to warn you. They fired and——"

"How many—and where?"

"A half company at Stiffkey and a half mile further on a regiment. We didn't know then they were Germans, not until they stopped us. You'd better telephone the garrison, and——"

"Thank you!" snapped the elderly gentleman. "I happen to be in command of this district. What are your names?"

Ford pushed the car forward, parting the crowd.

"I've no time for that!" he called. "We've got to warn every coast town in Norfolk. You take my tip and get London on the long distance!"

As they ran through the night Ford spoke over his shoulder.

"We've got them guessing," he said. "Now, what we want is a live wire, some one with imagination, some one with authority who will wake the countryside."

"Looks ahead there," said Birrell; "as though it hadn't gone to bed."

Before them, as on a Mafeking night, every window in Cley shone with lights.

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Drawn by Wallace Morgan.

Ford found himself looking into a revolver of the largest calibre issued by a civilized people.—Page 706.

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In the main street were fishermen, shopkeepers, "trippers" in flannels, summer residents. The women had turned out as though to witness a display of fireworks. Girls were clinging to the arms of their escorts, shivering in delighted terror. The proprietor of the Red Lion sprang in front of the car and waved his arms.

"What's this tale about Germans?" he demanded jocularly.

"You can see their lights from the beach," said Ford. "They've landed two regiments between here and Wells. Stiffkey is taken, and they've cut all the wires South."

The proprietor refused to be "had."

"Let 'em all come!" he mocked.

"All right," returned Ford. "Let 'em come, but don't take it lying down! Get those women off the streets, and go down to the beach, and drive the Germans back! Gangway," he shouted, and the car shot forward. "We warned you," he called, "and it's up to you to——"

His words were lost in the distance. But behind him a man's voice rose with a roar like a rocket and was met with a savage, deep-throated cheer.

Outside the village Ford brought the car to a halt and swung in his seat.

"This thing is going to fail!" he cried petulantly. "They don't believe us. We've got to show ourselves—many times—in a dozen places."

"The British mind moves slowly," said Birrell the Irishman. "Now, if this had happened in my native land——"

He was interrupted by the screech of a siren, and a demon car that spurned the road, that splattered them with pebbles, tore past and disappeared in the darkness. As it fled down the lane of their head-lights, they saw that men in khaki clung to its sides, were packed in its tonneau, were swaying from its running boards. Before they could find their voices a motor cycle, driven as though the angel of death were at the wheel, shaved their mud-guard and, in its turn, vanished into the night.

"Things are looking up!" said Ford. "Where is our next stop? As I said before, what we want is a *live* one."

Herbert pressed his electric torch against his road map.

"We are next billed to appear," he said, "about a quarter of a mile from here, at the signal-tower of the Great Eastern Railroad, where we visit the night telegraph operator and give him the surprise party of his life."

The three men had mounted the steps of the signal-tower so quietly that, when the operator heard them, they already surrounded him. He saw three German soldiers with fierce upturned mustaches, with flat squat helmets, with long brown rifles. They saw an anæmic, pale-faced youth without a coat or collar, for the night was warm, who sank back limply in his chair and gazed speechless with wide bulging eyes.

In harsh, guttural tones Ford addressed him.

"You are a prisoner," he said. "We take over this office in the name of the German Emperor. Get out!"

As though instinctively seeking his only weapon of defence, the hand of the boy operator moved across the table to the key of his instrument. Ford flung his rifle upon it.

"No, you don't!" he growled. "Get out!"

With eyes still bulging, the boy lifted himself into a sitting posture.

"My pay—my month's pay?" he stammered. "Can I take it?"

The expression on the face of the conqueror relaxed.

"Take it and get out," Ford commanded.

With eyes still fixed in fascinated terror upon the invader, the boy pulled open the drawer of the table before him and fumbled with the papers inside.

"Quick!" cried Ford.

The boy was very quick. His hand leaped from the drawer like a snake, and Ford found himself looking into a revolver of the largest calibre issued by a civilized people. Birrell fell upon the boy's shoulders, Herbert twisted the gun from his fingers and hurled it through the window, and almost as quickly hurled himself down the steps of the tower. Birrell leaped after him. Ford remained only long enough to shout: "Don't touch that instrument! If you attempt to send a message through, we will shoot. We go to cut the wires!"

For a minute, the boy in the tower sat rigid, his ears strained, his heart beating in sharp, suffocating stabs. Then, with his left arm raised to guard his face, he sank

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to his knees and, leaning forward across the table, inviting as he believed his death, he opened the circuit and through the night flashed out a warning to his people.

When they had taken their places in the car, Herbert touched Ford on the shoulder.

"Your last remark," he said, "was that what we wanted was a *live* one."

"Don't mention it!" said Ford. "He jammed that gun half down my throat. I can taste it still. Where do we go from here?"

"According to the route we mapped out this afternoon," said Herbert, "we are now scheduled to give exhibitions at the coast towns of Salthouse and Weybourne, but——"

"Not with *me!*" exclaimed Birrell fiercely. "Those towns have been tipped off by now by Blakeney and Cley, and the Boy Scouts would club us to death. I vote we take the back roads to Morston, and drop in on a lonely Coast Guard. If a Coast Guard sees us, the authorities will have to believe *him*, and they'll call out the navy."

Herbert consulted his map.

"There *is* a Coast Guard," he said, "stationed just the other side of Morston. And," he added fervently, "let us hope he's lonely."

They lost their way in the back roads, and when they again reached the coast an hour had passed. It was now quite dark. There were no stars, nor moon, but after they had left the car in a side lane and had stepped out upon the cliff, they saw for miles along the coast great beacon fires burning fiercely.

Herbert came to an abrupt halt.

"Since seeing those fires," he explained, "I feel a strange reluctance about showing myself in this uniform to a Coast Guard."

"Coast Guards don't shoot!" mocked Birrell. "They only look at the clouds through a telescope. Three Germans with rifles ought to be able to frighten one Coast Guard with a telescope."

The whitewashed cabin of the Coast Guard was perched on the edge of the cliff. Behind it the downs ran back to meet the road. The door of the cabin was open and from it a shaft of light cut across a tiny garden and showed the white fence and the walk of shells.

"We must pass in single file in front of that light," whispered Ford, "and then, after we are sure he has seen us, we must run like the devil!"

"I'm on in that last scene," growled Herbert.

"Only," repeated Ford with emphasis, "we must be *sure* he has seen us."

Not twenty feet from them came a bursting roar, a flash, many roars, many flashes, many bullets.

"He's seen us!" yelled Birrell.

After the light from his open door had shown him one German soldier fully armed, the Coast Guard had seen nothing further. But judging from the shrieks of terror and the sounds of falling bodies that followed his first shot, he was convinced he was hemmed in by an army, and he proceeded to sell his life dearly. Clip after clip of cartridges he emptied into the night, now to the front, now to the rear, now out to sea, now at his own shadow in the lamplight. To the people a quarter of a mile away at Morston it sounded like a battle.

After running half a mile, Ford, bruised and breathless, fell at full length on the grass beside the car. Near it, tearing from his person the last vestiges of a German uniform, he found Birrell. He also was puffing painfully.

"What happened to Herbert?" panted Ford.

"I don't know," gasped Birrell. "When I saw him last he was diving over the cliff into the sea. How many times did *you* die?"

"About twenty!" groaned the American, "and, besides being dead, I am severely wounded. Every time he fired, I fell on my face, and each time I hit a rock!"

A scarecrow of a figure appeared suddenly in the rays of the head-lights. It was Herbert, scratched, bleeding, dripping with water, and clad simply in a shirt and trousers. He dragged out his kit bag and fell into his golf clothes.

"Anybody who wants a perfectly good German uniform," he cried, "can have mine. I left it in the first row of breakers. It didn't fit me, anyway."

The other two uniforms were hidden in the seat of the car. The rifles and helmets, to lend color to the invasion, were dropped in the open road, and five minutes later three gentlemen in inconspicuous Harris tweeds, and with golf clubs protruding from every part of their car, turned into the

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shore road to Cromer. What they saw brought swift terror to their guilty souls and the car to an abrupt halt. Before them was a regiment of regulars advancing in column of fours, at the "double." An officer sprang to the front of the car and seated himself beside Ford.

"I'll have to commandeer this," he said. "Run back to Cromer. Don't crush my men, but go like the devil!"

"We heard firing here," explained the officer, "at the Coast Guard station. The Guard drove them back to the sea. He counted over a dozen. They made pretty poor practice, for he isn't wounded, but his gravel walk looks as though some one had drawn a harrow over it. I wonder," exclaimed the officer suddenly, "if you are the three gentlemen who first gave the alarm to Colonel Raglan and then went on to warn the other coast towns. Because, if you are, he wants your names."

Ford considered rapidly. If he gave false names and that fact were discovered, they would be suspected and investigated, and the worst might happen. So he replied that his friends and himself probably were the men to whom the officer referred. He explained they had been returning from Cromer, where they had gone to play golf, when they had been held up by the Germans.

"You were lucky to escape," said the officer. "And in keeping on to give warning you were taking chances. If I may say so, we think you behaved extremely well."

Ford could not answer. His guilty conscience shamed him into silence. With his siren shrieking and his horn tooting, he was forcing the car through lanes of armed men. They packed each side of the road. They were banked behind the hedges. Their camp-fires blazed from every hill-top.

"Your regiment seems to have turned out to a man!" exclaimed Ford admiringly.

"*My* regiment!" snorted the officer. "You've passed through five regiments already, and there are as many more in the dark places. They're everywhere!" he cried jubilantly.

"And I thought they were only where you see the camp-fires," exclaimed Ford.

"That's what the Germans think," said the officer. "It's working like a clock," he cried happily. "There hasn't been a hitch. As soon as they got your warning to Colonel Raglan, they came down to the coast like a wave, on foot, by trains, by motors, and at nine o'clock the Government took over all the railroads. The county regiments, regulars, yeomanry, territorials, have been spread along this shore for thirty miles. Down in London the Guards started to Dover and Brighton two hours ago. The Automobile Club in the first hour collected two hundred cars and turned them over to them in Bird Cage Walk. Cody and Grahame-White and eight of his air men left Hendon an hour ago to reconnoitre the south coast. Admiral Beatty has started with the Channel Squadron to head off the German convoy in the North Sea, and the torpedo destroyers have been sent to lie outside of Heligoland. We'll get *that* back by daylight. And on land every one of the three services is under arms. On this coast alone before sunrise we'll have one hundred thousand men, and from Colchester the brigade division of artillery, from Ipswich the R. H. A's. with siege-guns, field-guns, quick-firing-guns, all kinds of guns spread out over every foot of ground from here to Hunstanton. They thought they'd give us a surprise party. They will never give us *another* surprise party!"

On the top of the hill at Overstrand, the head-waiter of the East Cliff Hotel and the bearded German stood in the garden back of the house with the forbidding walls. From the road in front came unceasingly the tramp and shuffle of thousands of marching feet, the rumble of heavy cannon, the clanking of their chains, the voices of men trained to command raised in sharp, confident orders. The sky was illuminated by countless fires. Every window of every cottage and hotel blazed with lights. The night had been turned into day. The eyes of the two Germans were like the eyes of those who had passed through an earthquake, of those who looked upon the burning of San Francisco, upon the destruction of Messina.

"We were betrayed, general," whispered the head-waiter.

"We were betrayed, baron," replied the bearded one.

"But you were in time to warn the flotilla."

With a sigh, the older man nodded.

"The last message I received over the wireless," he said, "before I destroyed it,

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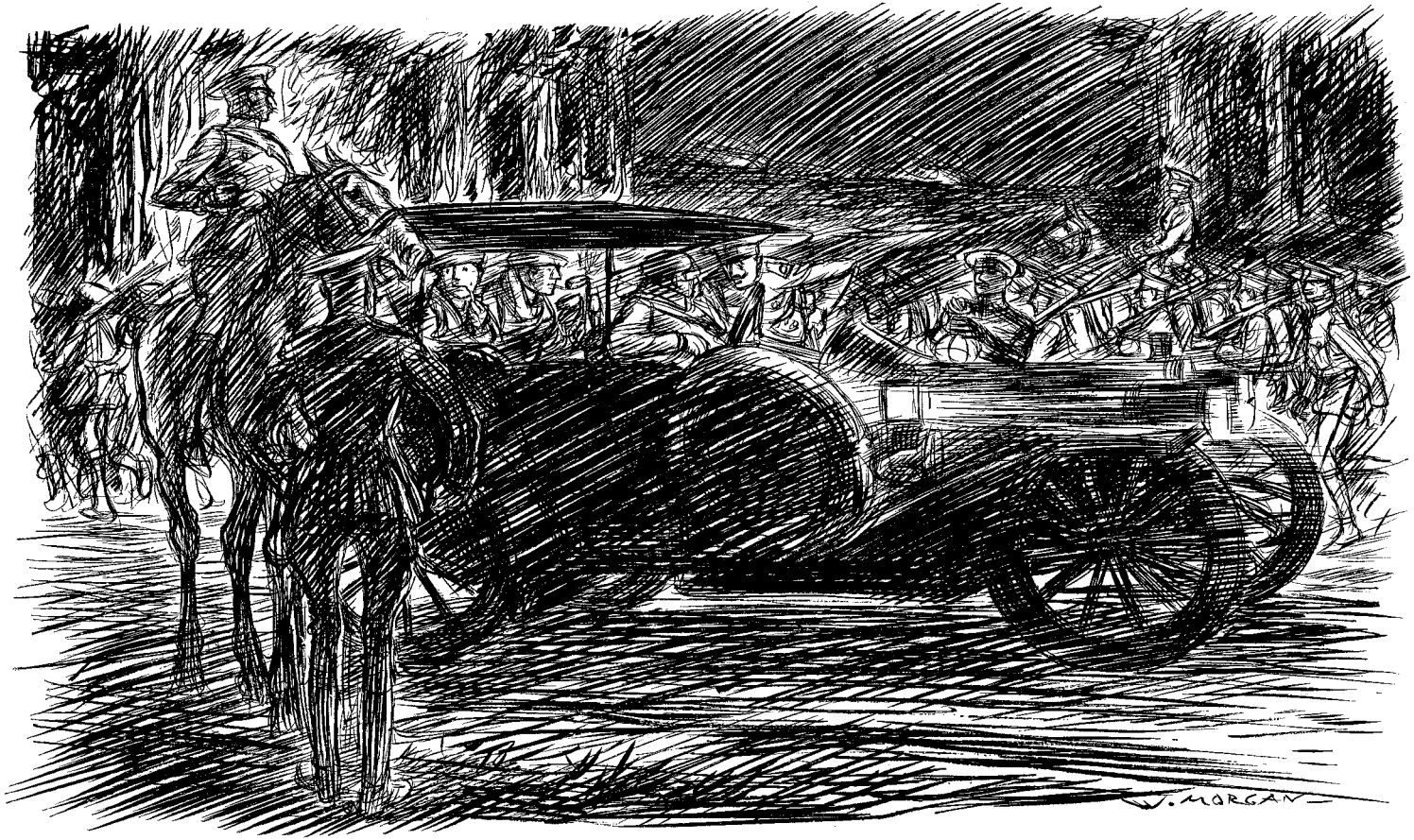

Drawn by Wallace Morgan.

"I'll have to commandeer this," he said. "Run back to Cromer. Don't crush my men, but go like the devil!" —Page 708.

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read, 'Your message understood. We are returning. Our movements will be explained as manœuvres.' And," added the general, "the English, having driven us back, will be willing to officially accept that explanation. As manœuvres, this night will go down into history. Return to the hotel," he commanded, "and in two months you can rejoin your regiment."

On the morning after the invasion the *New York Republic* published a map of Great Britain that covered three columns and a wood-cut of Ford that was spread over five. Beneath it was printed: "Lester Ford, our London correspondent, captured by the Germans; he escapes and is the first to warn the English people."

On the same morning, in an editorial in *The Times* of London, appeared this paragraph.

"The Germans were first seen by the Hon. Arthur Herbert, the eldest son of Lord Cinaris; Mr. Patrick Headford Birrell, both of Balliol College, Oxford, and Mr. Lester Ford, the correspondent of the *New York Republic*. These gentlemen escaped from the landing party that tried to make them prisoners, and at great risk proceeded in their motor car over roads infested by the Germans to all the coast towns of Norfolk, warning the authorities. Should the war office fail to recognize their services, the people of Great Britain will prove that they are not ungrateful."

A week later three young men sat at dinner on the terrace of the Savoy.

"Shall we, or shall we not," asked Herbert, "tell my uncle that we three, and we three alone, were the invaders?"

"That's hardly correct," said Ford; "as we now know there were two hundred thousand invaders. We were only the three who got ashore."

"I vote we don't tell him," said Birrell. "Let him think with everybody else that the Germans blundered; that an advance party landed too soon and gave the show away. If we talk," he argued, "we'll get credit for a successful hoax. If we keep quiet, everybody will continue to think we saved the country. I'm content to let it go at that."

LARGESS

By Julia C. R. Dorr

VITA Nuova! Many a year ago,
Wailing, I entered by the Gate of Pain,
The great White City—Life. Did I disdain
Its proffered hospitality, or know
By strange foreknowledge that some herb of woe
Embitters its best wine, and leaves its stain
On every lip that dares its cup to drain?—
Yet who, sweet Life, would thy dear gifts forego?
For though the child may struggle for its birth,
And its first broken utterance be a cry,
Largess of dawn and starlight comes to all—
Soft airs, dear light, sweet sounds, the joy of earth,
Bird song, and whispering leaves, and clouds that fly,
And tender loves that hold the heart in thrall!

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THE CLUE

By Alice Brown

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JAMES MONTGOMERY FLAGG

THE one detective story I have seen worked out through the inevitable lines converging to disclosure had forced itself on Ralph Masterman and me, and the end touched us vitally, as it did its principals. At least it opened our eyes to some of the causes of things, strained our skulls to the point of dangerously cracking the sutures, and probably induced a multiplicity of convolutions in the sensitive matter inside.

We had come home from exploring in Peru, our minds full of mountain chains and lakes and tamed volcanoes, and we unreasonably hoped—or said we did—that now we were going to settle down, perhaps to journalism. But great winds were blowing through our memories, big challenges to dominate the earth and open up more of her hidden passes, so that when our names were heard, in fifty years or so, men would say: "They? Oh, they did the last exploring left to do. Yes, they wrote *finis* on the geographical earth, and shut the book." Still the aunts—each of us possessed a fostering, doting aunt—thought we were going to stay at home.

It was the first day of our return when we were confronted with our riddle. The town itself, a topping suburb thinking no end of itself and refusing to be annexed, we found unchanged. Citizens, men and women, were still telephoning one another about the advisability of a pleasure drive along the lake, the only stone of stumbling being the name. Should it be Elm Road or Laurel Drive? They were still acutely anxious over the dark doings of milkmen, and the consequent jeopardy of babies, and they almost prayed for parasites to feed on forest pests. It was all a kind of beloved, exasperating heaven on earth to us, who had now known the winds in their birthplace, and entered into the secret places of the snow. But one thing had lamentably changed. Rose Red was married. That we knew, for the imminence of it had been one among the determining whips of fate to start us off to Peru, two men children afire with youth, and vibrating the chords of hearts denied. She was married to a man overweeningly rich, and of no occupation but to look "stunning," and she was not happy. We came home from that first "evening" given in our honor, an evening marked by the sponge lady-fingers we knew and the old conscientious fruit punch, and mounted, with one mind, to the loft, that had served as our youthful playground and tophet of confusion. There we lighted up and smoked madly in silence. Then:

"She's not Rose Red any more," said Ralph, jerking out the words as if somehow I had done it all, and he was angry.

"No," said I. "She's Snow White. She's not happy."

"She never knew a day's unhappiness. He's brought it on her somehow."

"Oh, yes. He's brought it on her."

"Well," said Masterman fractiously, throwing the ball to me as he always did when there was a doubt of the game, "are you going to do anything about it?"

That was the way he had snapped at me when I gave out at twenty-three thousand feet altitude, and he was in mortal fear lest he shouldn't get me down. It had nearly done for me that time, because I wasted breath in a thin hoot of a laugh, and I had no breath to spare. But to-day I didn't feel like laughing.

"He's a good-looking chap," I meditated.

"Six foot one," said Masterman, in bitter disparagement. Masterman is stocky, and not over five feet eleven, a Norse giant of a hero.

"I mean he's got no tricks. He looks you in the eye. He takes his fruit punch like a man, and not as if he couldn't wait for the whiskey at home on the sideboard. Looks as if the whiskey wouldn't phase him, either."

"Oh, no, he ain't a soaker, if that's what you mean. He's all right, very fit, clean,

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That question, Aunt Celesta, I could see, considered coarse.—Page 713.

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fond enough of his tailor, not too fond. No, whatever's wrong, his shop ain't going to hang out a sign. We've got to go in and examine the goods."

"We've no license," said I ruefully.

"What?"

"Rose Red didn't marry us—individually or collectively."

"No," said Masterman, setting his mouth in its implication of bedrock. "But I don't see Rose Red fade out to Snow White without knowing the reason why. And if I find out the reason why, and any man's guilty—" Here he paused, and we smoked on.

The houses our aunts had inherited were side by side, with a little gate in the garden fence between, so that Masterman and I practically lived together as we always had. The aunts, each in a morning muslin or an afternoon silk, made according to an extinct ideal, sat each on her own veranda and knitted rhythmically and widened aristocratic old nostrils to the honeysuckles. We had lost no time in pumping these ladies about the standing and habits of the husband of that dear perfection known once in the loft as Rose Red.

"What's the fellow's name?" I inquired over my third egg, while Aunt Celesta beamed at me, a light blue beam out of faded eyes behind a rim of gold, "the one Rose married?"

"Why, you met him last night," said Aunt Celesta, pained at somebody's lack of observance in not having made the presentation clear. "Weren't you introduced?"

"I dare say," said I, seeing I might have jumped more dexterously into the heart of the puzzle. "Hamlin, isn't it? Good fellow?"

"Admirable," said Aunt Celesta warmly. She was now rescuing a fly from the cream jug, and I read in her face the conflict between ruth over insect life untimely ended, horrified estimate of the fly's culpability, based on the propaganda of modern theories touching disease, disgust at her task, and the query of her fighting soul whether she must really sacrifice the cream, though the kitchen supply wasn't at its maximum. She had very little testimony to contribute.

"Yes, a nice young man," she said, raising the screen and conveying the fly into a wider world to dry his wings. "Very nice, indeed."

Of her last scruple I relieved her, pouring myself cream with a dashing hand, and offering her the cup to fill.

"He's got money, hasn't he?" I plunged.

"Oh, yes," said Aunt Celesta. "They're rich, really. Quite the wealthiest people in town, I should say."

"Live well?"

That question, Aunt Celesta, I could see, considered coarse. She answered rather stiffly and to no purpose, and I drank the coffee I didn't want and went through the little gate to find Ralph. He was coming toward the little gate to meet me, and as by one consent Aunt Clara and Aunt Celesta pottered out on their verandas, exchanged a beaming smile indicating their community of blessedness in the possession of nephews, and settled to the forenoon's task of keeping moderately alive.

"I can't find out a damned thing," said Masterman incautiously.

At the qualifying word each aunt jerked her head galvanically, but settled it again, knowing she could not, as the older novelists had it, have heard aright.

"There's nothing to find out," said I drearily. "What do you suppose two aunts"—we always spoke of them generically as if the relationship made a type—"what would they know of a chap of thirty-three that walked right, and talked right, and dressed right? Nothing, old man, and you know it."

Masterman hit my foot with his.

"There he is," said he. "There's the fellow now."

It was Frederick Hamlin, and he was coming in at Aunt Clara's gate. He looked very well in the morning light, slightly older, rather faded about the eyes, and he walked in haste, as if he came for an end. We turned with an absurd eagerness considering the slightness of our acquaintance, and met him midway of the yard. Masterman almost stammered in his desire to shunt him away from the aunts and get him to ourselves.

"Come on up in the loft," said he, with what seemed an exaggerated cordiality. "Unless you were coming to call."

"No," said Hamlin, in his rather grave voice. He stopped half-way up the path and adjusted his eye-glasses. That led my eyes to his, and I saw what I had not the

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night before, in our stiff encounter, that they looked very tired, slightly apprehensive, and that there were wrinkles about them not accordant with his comparative youth. "No," he repeated, lifting his hat to one aunt and making a comprehensive bow to both. "I came to see you two."

So we went up, by its crazy outside stairs, to the loft. He looked about him curiously while Masterman cleared a seat; he seemed pleased to find himself there. Nothing could adequately describe the loft, even an inventory. You'd have gone daft over the collection of things, the chronological sequence of them, from tops and Happy Jacks and fairy books to the electrical apparatus of our college days, and the textbooks of no use to us now, though we were grateful to them, for on them we had built our degrees.

"I didn't know there was such a place in town," said Hamlin.

"There isn't another," said Masterman. "This grew. We couldn't make it. Nobody could."

He had got out tobacco, and Hamlin accepted with an air of not caring very much whether he had it or not. We smoked, and Masterman deliberately began trying to turn him inside out. He asked him questions even: what did he think of this, of that, current topics all; and I could see he meant to get at the back of Hamlin's mind, to roll it over and see what it could mean as it affected Rose Red. But Masterman wasn't clever at that kind of thing. He was too simple-honest, too impetuous, too much off his guard, with his bright eyes telling how much he wanted to know. Nor was I up to it myself. He and I were sons of the earth, made to serve her, and even on occasion dominate her. We didn't belong in lawyers' pens. But Hamlin answered him patiently, candidly, it was evident, and with no particular interest in his own tastes as he was called upon to map them out. Yes, he had travelled extensively in Europe, not beyond. No, he wasn't a socialist. Some very good fellows were, he believed. He understood there was a lot to complain of in the system of things. And so on, a tepid answer bearing testimony to his preference for the middle course, but always curving back the talk, when he could manage it, to our own exploits in Peru. He persisted in regarding them as exploits; and when we decried them slightly, he said with a conclusiveness he evidently thought unanswerable:

"Well, but they've been written up, you know."

We laughed rather shamefacedly, just because we were so ingenuously pleased to have them written up. He gave us no time to deny our just sentiments, but plumped at us a question that had mysteriously, as he saw it, some tremendous weight.

"Where are you going next?"

We looked at each other guiltily. Our talk together, up to this time, had always been prefaced by "ifs." *If* we should cut stick again! We knew pretty well geographically what we should do, but hardly what we had a right to do, with two age-foundered aunts in harbor.

"The aunts think we're going to settle down," I temporized, and Hamlin answered me almost passionately:

"Settle down! You! after all you've done? You won't. You can't. I say, you two—" His voice dropped here. It became the pleading of a boy who has no right to the secret passion he is begging you to appease—"whatever it is, let me—let me go with you."

Masterman grew white with the pure surprise of it. I lost my breath for a second, and perhaps I, too, looked white; but I picked up in time to blurt out:

"But you can't, you know. You—" Here I stopped, but they both knew perfectly well what my intemperate tongue would have added: "You're married to Rose Red. You're bound with gold chains to the heavenly chariot of heart's content. You've got to make her happiness. You can't go off climbing peaks, and freezing and starving and fighting the horrible goddess life. You've got to stay here and cherish life, make a warm nest for it. You're the husband of Rose Red."

And while we stared at one another in an extremity of feeling that seemed to have no adequate cause, a voice came from below, flute-like, a voice we knew.

"You boys up there?"

Masterman was out of his seat and, with one bound, at the door. I drew forward a little rocking-chair I knew. It had been sitting in a corner ever since we went away, covered with the flag Masterman and I had worked two summers to buy. (Masterman

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used to say we worked for it till nobody would have us, and then we worked the aunts.)

"Why," said Hamlin, in a tone of wonder, "that's Rose."

"Yes," said I, in excitement and a momentary base willingness he should see there were more roses than one. There was his Rose, but there might be ours too. "That's Rose."

And meantime her light step had brought her up the stair, and Masterman was conducting her in—this with a tender, blundering haste, as if nothing so precious as this visit had ever happened, and yet nothing could have been so surely expected, because it tailed on to the visits of long ago. She was over the sill, a wraith of a thing, with her shadowy hair and pale cheeks that used to be so bright, and Hamlin was the first one she saw. Her eyes fell upon him before ever her smiling at Masterman had done, and as she saw him she shrank and withered. It was a horrible sight, that first instinctive recoil from the man she should have welcomed. Hamlin saw it as I did, and he too shrank and paled, and for that second the two stood there, the width of the room between them, as if it were some awful, unseen gulf. She recovered herself instantly, the woman's way.

"Fred!" she said, with a pretty intonation of affectionate surprise. "I didn't know you were here."

"No," said he awkwardly, "I knew you didn't."

He too had risen, and we all seemed, in a foolish rivalry, to be offering her a seat. In smiling control of herself now, she took the little chair; but Hamlin did not return to his.

"I've got to go on up to the Branch," he said, in quite a commonplace tone, "to see if my saddle's mended. Shall I drop in for you on the way back?"

"You needn't, dear," said she, in her nicest manner. "I shall be home long before you."

Then Hamlin went, and Ralph and I stood at the stairhead and called down robust good-bys, the more scrupulous in that it somehow seemed to us his stock was very patently depreciated; and we returned to Rose who, with her hand on the old brown volume of Grimm to which her chair was neighbor, was, for the first time since our coming, Rose Red again. I could have cried—Ralph says he did feel his throat balling up—to see how swiftly and pathetically she had taken on her own look, the look of one undaunted by any aspect of life because life had always been so kind to her.

"Now, boys, talk," said she, and though we understood this meant Peru, we had for the moment nothing to tell. But she questioned us skilfully, avowed her ignorance of high places, wanted to learn what posies grew wild there, and before we knew it, we were talking fourteen to the dozen, and had forgotten such a chap as Hamlin ever lived. She too forgot all about her pact of being home before him, and one o'clock struck the hour when our suburb dines the year round, before she remembered that this was New England, and not Peru. Then she rose in a gayety of haste, and Masterman, foolishly prolonging old time cheer, broke our moment into bits.

"We're nothing but blooming rattletraps," said he. "How about you, Rose? We haven't said a word about you."

She paled. The stricken look came back. Some physical blow might well have struck all eagerness from her face.

"I?" she maundered. "Oh, you know all about me. I haven't been to Peru."

And she smiled at us in the old dear way, and took her parasol and was gone. We had no conclusions to exchange, Masterman and I. She had not been married two years, and she was at bitter odds with something. Why?

"Do you know," said Ralph that night, as we sat in the silence that served us for great companionship, "it's occurred to me that the detective stories are all rotten."

"Why?"

"Because they puddle over what happened. They don't care a hang what made it happen. A man is killed. We try to find out who killed him. If we had any effective force, we should find out why he was likely to be killed, and find out before it happened. Then likely it wouldn't happen at all."

"You mean, if Hamlin poisoned Rose Red——"

"Don't!"

"Or she poisoned him, we should be all agog bringing somebody to justice. But now, when they look infernally tragic, and yet haven't broken the law, we still ought to find out what's doing?"

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"Yes. Something *is* the matter. If we don't find out, we can't quash it."

"Maybe," I suggested, "it isn't our business. There's something peculiarly offensive and defensive about the marriage bond."

"It's my business," said he briefly, 'whether it's yours or not."

And whether I owned to it as crudely, I was watching and speculating for all I was worth. We watched her and we studied him. All our conclusions agreed. She spoke to him sweetly from what seemed even a compassionate regard, she fulfilled toward him all the outward observances of courtesy. But she was either afraid of him or she had for him some degree of that repulsion which is scorn. He, too, was afraid not of her, it might be, but of some unspoken inner judgment, whereof he caught the savor. He did not propitiate her. He was, we began dimly to see, too reasonably constituted, grounded by birth and tradition in the rules of living as they obtain between woman and man. Yet plainly there was an inner judgment of hers, and it did set them irremediably apart. And at this stage, seeing it was something between the two that in no manner concerned any one outside their little kingdom of revolt, we gave up the job. It was all very well for Masterman to argue it was his business because it affected Rose. It simply wasn't, and he knew it. Nobody could help. We must leave Rose Red to her imprisonment in the dungeon she had found, by ill chance, within her castle of delight. We would go away. If Rose had been afraid of her husband we couldn't have gone, but it was apparent that both of them were afraid of some trap between them. And whoever had set it, the trap was theirs.

"But," said Masterman, when we owned our common aversion to the case as a case, "something, sometime, will chuck the clue into our hands."

"Why will it?"

"Because that's the way things are. I don't believe your Burns or your Sherlock really braids the rope that hangs a man. No, he braids and braids, and gets infernally stale over it, and then suddenly some little kobold leaps out of the bush and twists all the strands he's just made up his mind to drop. No, you do the work, your part of it, and because you've done it, something passes you the clue."

"Your rhetoric's mixed," said I.

"No matter. I know what I mean—and it's so."

Then the incredible happened. The aunts, of all rooted creatures in the world, they who had been wedded to one spot through all the years of our troublesome nurture, the aunts disclosed to us their intention of going abroad. We were mightily pleased, chiefly because that proved they still had the spirit to conceive it, and instantly offered to put them in the way of a fair start and a luxurious progress. But what fell upon us then was the implication that we were to take them. We who had dragged ourselves over unkindly heights, and snatched breath out of rarefied air were to potter round the beaten ways of Europe with two darling spinsters, who might—we were rather galled under that suspicion—have concocted the scheme for our sole benefit. We were wanderers by nature. It drove them to a mild distraction to see us mulling over maps, picking out the insufficiently charted spots to travel in. Our immediate safety was assured, so they benevolently reasoned, by going abroad with them. Thus were we to satisfy our gypsy cravings while sticking strictly to the spots whereof picture postals are made. If we were taking a funicular to Fiesole, we couldn't, at the same time, be rampaging up savage cliffs.

"Allee samee, we've got to go with them," said Masterman gloomily, when we met in the loft to consider it.

"We owe it to them," I responded in the old phrase, from as inexorable a certainty that certain debts had to be paid.

"Sure! But what if we didn't? If two such infernal old trumps want to go abroad again, why, they've got to do it, that's all, and go the way they like."

This was in September, and actually in October we sailed, each of us the rather awkward convoy of an aunt, but resolved to show ourselves good and grateful wards. Hamlin was the last man to bid us goodby. He came to the station where Aunt Clara was adjusting a lavender ribbon on her trunk, having removed the red one she had affixed the previous week—this because red began to seem to her the color of universal choice. He shook hands, with an air of liking us very much, and feeling sure we could have helped him.

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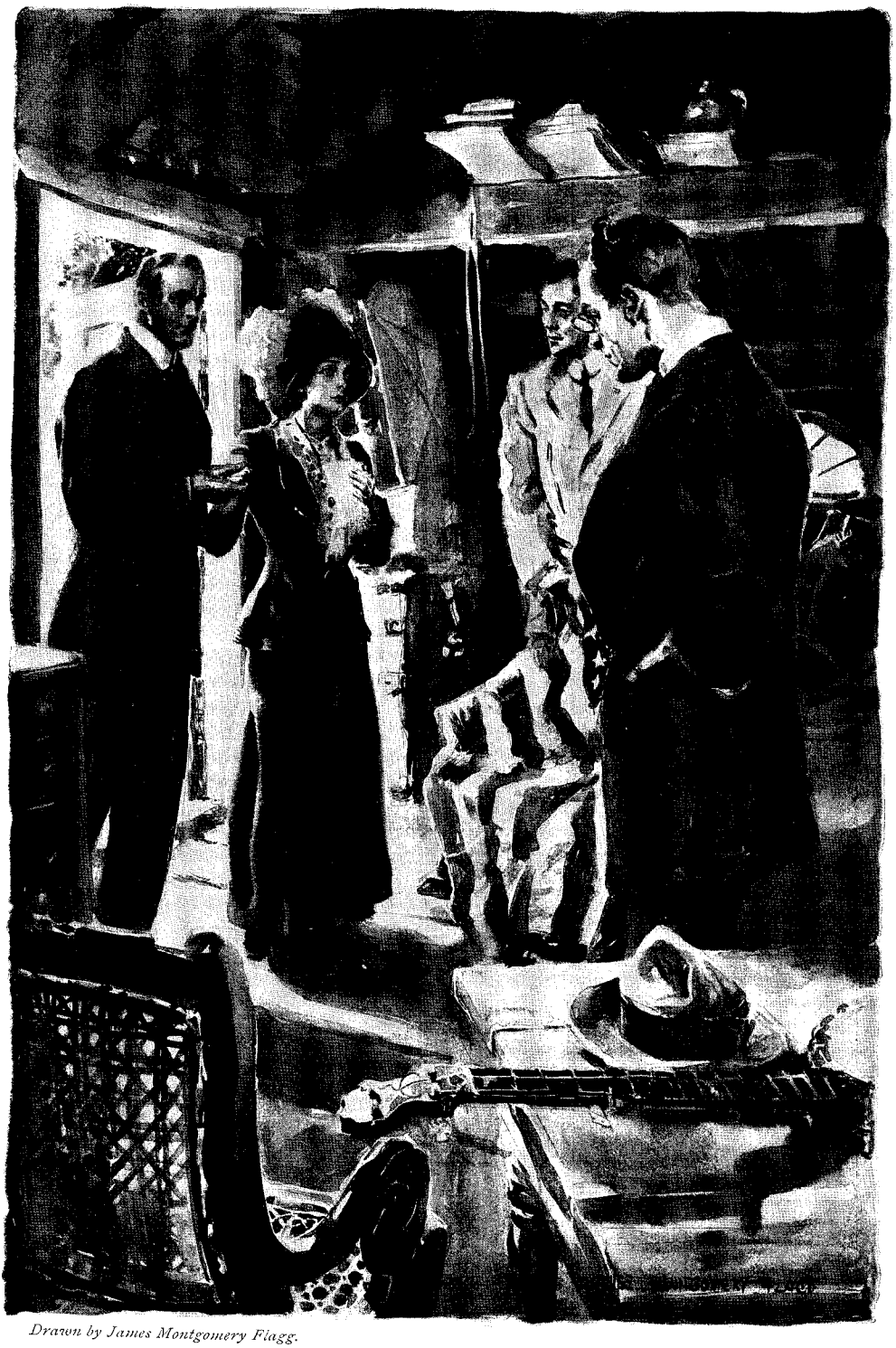

Drawn by James Montgomery Flagg.

And as she saw him she shrank and withered.—Page 715.

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"I say, you know," he volunteered, just as Rose came up and offered to tie Aunt Clara's bow, "you won't forget."

There was nothing we were aware of having promised to remember, and he continued instantly, with the implication of suddenly recalling that his request was more important to him than to us:

"If you find you're going on any sort of exploring trip, just count me in."

Masterman, with a rueful look, indicated the aunts where they stood, frail, and yet undaunted in their determination to carry the traditions of the suburb into a foreign continent.

"We're hardly likely to do much batting round," he suggested.

"I know, I know," Hamlin concurred, with his nervous conclusiveness. "But after this—any time, you know."

And then Rose had turned to us and said: "Good-by, boys. Good luck." The smoke of the train was casting its cloud behind, and for the first time we thought the aunts trembled before their venture, and we snatched in wild joyousness at the hope that they might give it up. We should have lain down at their feet, I believe, if they had, and begged them to walk on us to ways of security and peace. But they called on the unchanging fibre within them, doubtless for our sakes, and we dutifully supported them on board.

The winter passed in a conventional progress, under which the aunts throve, and Masterman and I sank. We learned to know the capitals of Europe in all their capacity for giving pain—pain of boredom, wet and cold. He and I hated *pensions*. The aunts loved them, because they afforded social intercourse. We hated the promenades of southern watering-places, and were made indescribably wretched by being expected to *flaner* before shop windows, where the aunts expressed the most persistent interest in what they had no idea of buying. But what could you do? They were darling aunts, and we owed them everything. One reward we had: they seemed to grow more indestructible every day, and we knew at last that, if they had kept the life in our young bodies by strenuous coddling when our pretty mothers died, at least we were pumping a few extraneous years of vitality into them by abetting them in sheer fun as they saw it. But at Lugano, one langorous day in the early summer, we gave out. It came upon us simultaneously, and the expression of it, uttered while we sat under an oleander, sorting picture cards so that the aunts should send them in the order of topographical lucidity, was my saying, out of no voluntary choice, and hardly knowing why I said it:

"We could climb the Matterhorn."

Masterman did not even answer with any directness. He merely shuffled the cards together and tucked them into their envelope.

"I'll go in and tell them," he said, and go he did.

They were as surprised by the suddenness of it as I, and chiefly on that account they yielded. Or had they anticipated some divagation of the sort, and now accepted it as less serious than they had feared? Also the sense of lightness, of variety, bound to uplift the traveller abroad, whispered them that it would be no ill matter, but rather a novelty the more, to be left in charge of their own fate at Lugano. They merely specified that we were to take care of ourselves and come back soon. Of course we said nothing about the Matterhorn. That grim entity never once punctuated the discussion. We merely said we were going, with their accord, up to Zermatt for a breath of mountain air.

To Zermatt we went, gayer with every inch of altitude, more like boys released from tasks that yesterday had looked perennial. We went up by train, and also from Zermatt on, because we had to be back with the aunts in a reasonable time. We got into fits of laughter over it all, our dash for exhilaration, and a little red-headed English parson across the aisle watched us with a tolerant interest. Finally he threw us a comment on the day, and we gathered that he, too, though unconsciously, was a little drunk on air. He was enchanted with the idea of climbing the Matterhorn, of our doing it, while he offered sage suggestion. He seemed, at that altitude, to think it a mere question of vim and go, and as to a guide, he scouted it. Our forethought and our shoes he alike despised, intimating that he could climb the Matterhorn in his ecclesiastical garb.

"Even," Masterman told him, "the apron and gaiters of your future."

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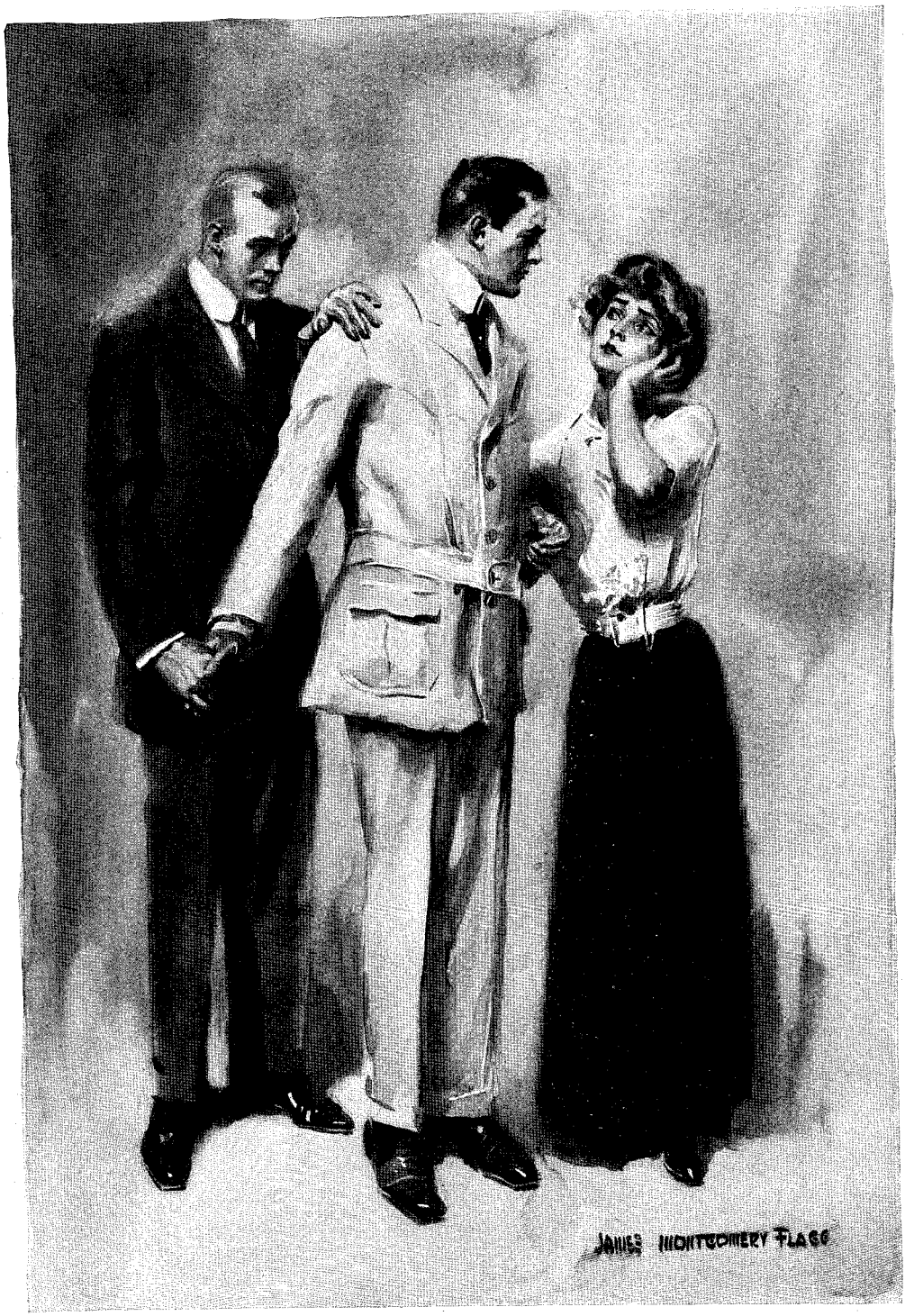

Drawn by James Montgomery Flagg.

"No matter whether anybody knows he died gloriously, if we know it".—Page 722.

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He smiled at that, but insisted that the precursors, Tyndall and the rest, had robbed the adventure of its quality by their "ropes and things."

In a pause of this descriptive fluency, while he was temporarily engaged with the bleak world beside the track, I turned to Masterman.

"I've been thinking," I said, "about Rose."

He nodded.

"So have I," said he, "all night. As if she was near."

An unaccountable prescience came over me.

"Ralph," I said, "if it hadn't been Hamlin, it ought to have been you."

He said nothing, but I knew he could not resent the baldness of it. I saw how he had cherished the idea of her, not in the least as I had, as an unattainable dream, but a present necessity of his life. A height always affected me foolishly. It made Masterman melancholy and silent, but it loosed my thoughts and tongue.

"I'm out of it," I said. "I'd do anything for her, anything. But you're the man."

Still he said nothing, and we came to the land of thin air and snow, and little black pools and ominously dark birds hovering over them, and there we stayed all night, the Englishman with us, rather more respectful of our respect for mountains, the colder he grew and the tighter the air bound his feet with invisible chains the night had ready. And in the morning, overlooking that icy edge of the world, we bade him good-by, and with Max Stiege, prince of guides, began our climb. As a feat, it was climbing made easy, after our unattended forays in the south. But the Matterhorn hadn't made it easy. You could fancy it frozen there in a rage at the chains put upon it by the dauntlessness of man.

Not three hours up that cruel inaccessibility, we came on a black figure prone across a jag of rock, as if he had fallen and the rock impaled him. Stiege put his great hands to the man, and turned him face upward to the day, and we got brandy into him. A lone man, a fool climbing without a guide. We swore over him while we loosed the oxygen, and when he opened his eyes, we swore again to another note. For this was Hamlin. As soon as he got hold of himself he struck our ministrants away, not, as I thought, from deliberate purpose to die, but because the hostility of the outer world had crazed him. There was left within him only an instinct of resistance, a mad determination not to endure defeat. But we turned brandy into him, we covered him with our jackets, and he lay looking at us, the agonized stare of the departing soul that has much to say, and finds, instead of ordered words, confusion. That look of his eyes had heartbreak in it, too, from a foolish reason, but a very real one. They were near-sighted eyes, and without their glasses they wore a pleading softness. Masterman bent over him. He, with a more direct cognition than mine, understood what must be asked.

"Where is she?"

The eyes seemed to make a sign, the slightest quiver of the lid to the invisible safety below.

"Zermatt?" Masterman prompted.

The eyes said, "Yes." Then Hamlin seemed to gather himself for the last disastrous leap, that wild expenditure of breath whereby he must reach bankruptcy the sooner.

"Tell her—" he stopped.

"Tell her—" Masterman repeated.

"I don't understand—about London. I never did."

And then, as we began the oxygen again, he died, as if he willed it, in the face of science. Masterman could not believe it. He was wild with anguish, and long after the moment of hope was over, he kept up the fight. But Max Stiege and I knew it, and so did Masterman at last, and that the only thing to do for Hamlin was to carry him down to Zermatt to his waiting wife; and when Masterman admitted it, he gave a big sob like a woman and helped us readily. I believe at the instant Hamlin seemed dearer to him than I, dearer than Rose, perhaps—for whatever the mischance between them the man belonged to Rose, and he was dead.

When we had made our difficult way to the Gorner Grat, there was the Englishman ready to chaff us because we had retreated; but finding what wreckage we bore, he sobered and helped us greatly. He had really lingered at the Gorner Grat out of some kindliness for us, to see how we liked that

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needle of the upper sleet, and now, with Stiege, took charge of our miserable departing.

"Does anybody know the man?" he asked Stiege, and we left Stiege to answer, "No." Then, in the course of our terrible preparations, he did see Hamlin's face. That was his clue, the clue he didn't seek, the clue he tossed to us.

"My God!" he breathed, at first in awe, and then reverently, as if appalled by the ordered paths of life. "That's my man."

"What man?" Masterman demanded savagely.

At last we were to know Hamlin. At the same instant we were sure of it. The Englishman, in that instant, could no more help telling than we could help asking.

"It was two years ago," said he, "in London, near the Strand. There was a runaway. This man was there, a lady with him. There was the runaway. This man leaped aside. He pushed a woman, to get free. She was killed, the woman. It was over in an instant. Nobody seemed to see how it was, nobody but me."

"Did she see it?" Masterman asked steadily. "His wife—the lady, I should say?"

"I don't know. I hope not. That would have been infernal. And I don't know whether she was his wife. She was frightened, for she fell, fainted, perhaps, and I saw her put into a cab."

I saw Masterman rejecting the clue as I rejected it. Now we had it, we didn't want the horrible thing. We would have given worlds not to have had it. Masterman laughed rather foolishly, in the feint of tearing up the clue.

"You wouldn't know him again," he said, "a live man in the Strand and this dead man here."

The Englishman faced him down indignantly.

"Rather," said he immovably, in the tone of those who have set their empire beyond the seas. "I'll tell you how I know. In the instant after the woman dropped, this fellow reeled back, he shut his eyes for one second only, and he looked as if he were already dead. He saw what he'd done, d'ye see? He saw what he'd done. And he looked as he does now."

"We must get rid of him," I said to Ralph, on the safe way down to Zermatt. "He mustn't see her. He's got too keen an eye."

He nodded. But chance was good to us there, for our helpful Englishman found a telegram at the hotel, and it hurried him away. I felt dazed with the strangeness, the intention of it all. Had we two come up here to the Matterhorn because we had desired the clue, and that was where the clue could be given us? I turned drunkenly to Ralph.

"I don't understand it," I babbled. "I can't."

"You mean you won't," he said doggedly "It's plain enough."

"Was he a coward? Had she seen that—in the Strand? Was he forever after trying to reinstate himself with her? Did he climb the Matterhorn for that—like a desperate fool, alone, with not even a flask in his pocket, and in—O my God!—in those shoes? Do you remember his shoes?"

"Yes," said Masterman dryly, "I saw his shoes."

And because his voice sounded as if it might break and curse or sob, I gave over baiting him.

I was the one to tell Rose Red. Masterman said I was, and I couldn't dispute it for a moment. There were things to be said that Masterman mustn't say, because his faith to her must not be violated; yet he must hear them lest he afterward deny them to her. We went up to her sitting-room, and she came forward to meet us, dear Rose Red, all surprise and joy in us. But she was not happy even yet: more of a woman, perhaps, with a wistful pathos between her brows. She looked at us, first one and then the other.

"What is it?" she asked.

Then I did my big deed, the one I am prouder of than all the quiet honest ways I have lived since.

"Your husband—" said I.

"Yes," she prompted.

"Your husband was on that devil of a Matterhorn. He found a chap cast away there. He gave him his brandy, gave him his clothes. The other man came down. Hamlin——"

Her eyes shone with a terrible anguish of exultation.

"He died," she said.

"Of exhaustion," I told her.

"Where is the man he saved? I must

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see him. I must hear—" She was all a passionate haste.

It was leading me further than I had stopped to consider. That is the revenge of lies. They laugh at us and take us centuries out of our way; for they, too, are on the side of God, and would gladly die for him and for his worlds. But I couldn't flinch.

"The man we lost in the flurry," I told her. "He'd been through too much. His head wasn't quite right, either, nor Ralph's. I'm the only one that got the story straight. Ralph came up later. He never saw the man at all. But he was the one to ease Hamlin for that few minutes before——"

She turned from one to the other of us in a dumb inquiry it was terrible to see. Was there no more, it said? Could the man she had loved slip away from her into everlasting silence and leave not the thinnest whisper on the air.

"There was the message, Ralph," I said roughly. My lie had made a different man of me. I clung to it doggedly as a criminal to a misbegotten deed; but I was suddenly furious with circumstance for having forced me to that ill companionship.

"A message?" Her look of hunger wrung my heart to bleeding, and I loved my lie.

"'Tell her,' said Ralph, 'I don't understand—about London. I never did.'" This he said grimly, as if it saved his reason to have something to bring her that was true. I knew Ralph. He hated and loved my lie as I did. But he loved me for telling it.

Rose, incredulous joy upon her face, thanked God, and let her tears flow, and told us God had sent us to Hamlin and to her.

"We mustn't speak of this," I assured her, fencing my lie with all the guile I had. "The man he saved—when he comes to himself he'll feel like a cur for going. There'll be inquiries—talk—talk. We want to get you away, to the aunts down there. We'll say we found him dying of exhaustion. You'd be willing? He doesn't need credit with the world if he's got his credit mark from you."

She put her hand on my arm, partly in agreement, partly to help her weakness.

"It shall be—everything shall be as you think best," she said. "No matter whether anybody knows he died gloriously, if we know it, we three——"

"Yes," said Masterman, and his hand was on my shoulder. He was comforting me for my lie, blessing me for it, old Masterman, "we know."

ON POSILIPO HILL

By Winfield Scott Moody

PURPLE and golden sea, and soft winds moving
Through thickened oak and ilex branches where
Last summer's life persists, and last year's loving,
In January air.

Like a gray sea-bird's wing amid the shining
Floats Ischia, belovèd, distant, dim,
Remotest of the crescent isles reclining
Upon the heaving rim.

Below, the city like a lizard basking,
Sprawls over hill, and terrace, and the sands;
Beyond, the peak its constant menace masking
In plumèd silence, stands.

The long rays smite Castellamare, splinter
Upon Sorrento's reddened cliffs, and shrill
Blows the first whistling call of gusty winter
On Posilipo hill.

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ALLEMANDE LEFT!

A STORY OF THE NORTH COUNTRY

By Mary Synon

ILLUSTRATIONS BY N. C. WYETH

JEAN FEROUX folded his green sash of the Laval Seminary, put away his law books and began the study of engineering after the fall of the bridge-work near Chaudiere had carried his only brother with a half-score other boys of the service down to death in the swift St. Lawrence. The disaster that gave birth to the boy's thought of continuing Etienne's work aroused his family's determined opposition, but in spite of the pleas of his mother, the command of his father, and the interference of all the connections of the Quebec Feroux, Jean persisted in his intention until they granted him his right of choice and set about securing him an appointment in the Quebec Province, reminding him all the while that the law was his real *metier* and that from lack of Etienne's love of the wilderness he must inevitably fail in this foolhardy venture. But little Jean Feroux refused the offers of influence from grandfathers, and uncles, and cousins as calmly as he told them that he would not fail of success, and went to find the foot of his ladder of endeavor somewhere on the Transcontinental Right-of-Way through the Bush of the North Country.

With high hopes of fortune and high standards of courage he left the old city where the Feroux had dwelt in satisfied eminence for over two centuries. The spirit of the men who had been crusaders from the Old France of Louis the Saint and of those who had been captains of voyageurs in the New France of Jacques Cartier lighted for him beacons on the hills of to-morrow; but there came to the boy one poignant moment of regret that he had not chosen the easier way to those heights when, as the train left Levis, he saw Quebec as a great gray picture through the river mist.

Although the strangeness of the wild land under Hudson Bay and the excitement of a new venture buoyed up his hope and his courage the regret came to him again, deepening through the hot summer of the Bush. For three months he worked as an axeman fifty miles from the End of Steel, his only companion a dour Scotchman who never spoke except under the spur of most urgent need. He suffered hunger, and thirst, and the cruel plague of the black flies. At times his loneliness for home became almost physical pain. But he squared his sturdy shoulders and did his work so well that the Scot added his own burden to it, and Jean Feroux was doing the work of two men when he was transferred to the Mattawishkwia.

The Mattawishkwia was the most isolated post on the Right-of-Way. Through the coldest winter of twenty-odd years in the North Country, a winter that the Crees around York House named "the White Curse of God" and the engineering corps called "the Bone-Eater," Jean Feroux lived in a camp where he was the only white man not a Slav laborer. The nearest residency was a two days' journey and he knew none of the men there. The mail-carrier, his only visitor, brought him five times that winter sheafs of letters from Quebec, all bemoaning his absence and all describing to him in varying degrees of detail the gay life of that gay town.

The reading of these messages filled his mind through the still days and nights, and in the solid whiteness of the frozen Bush Jean Feroux began to see mirages of Quebec. Lying on the fir boughs before the drum stove of his tent, he would picture the city as plainly as if he were standing near the King's Bastion at the head of the Citadel toboggan and looking down on hills, and river, and streets, and spires, and towers. He could see the brilliant lights of the Chateau, the sentry signals on the ramparts, the tiny twinkles of the ferries, the

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far-off beacons on the dim Laurentians, the nearer glow of the Lower Town. He could see the rush of the toboggans, the dash of the sleighs, and the whirl of carnival gayety as vividly as if he were a Peeping Tom, watching the people of his dreams move in a maze of revelry. He could see the soft little lights in the houses, even those of his own home; but he could never hear a sound though he strained his ears in the listening till the wail of the wolves broke on the night and brought him back to icy realization of the camp. Then, while the mirage faded, he would repeat like a chant the song of longing of that homesick habitant who afar from the mountains prayed for the boon of one glimpse of the hill of San Sebastien.

But when his mother, terrified by published tales of the hardships of the Bush, wrote him an entreaty to come home, he refused her with decision. For that winter had made the work he had undertaken for his brother's memory his own ambition. He had come to picturing his triumphal return to Quebec with the laurels of a success that he should wrest from the wilds, for victory meant to him the blazoning of it in the old gray city where so many victories had been blazoned. His dramatic sense thrilled at the greatness of the enterprise in which he was a factor and the surging thoughts of empire building filled him with those dreams of power that come only to a boy who tries his skill with the tools of his chosen trade and finds himself equal to the task. Inspired by these and in a desperate struggle against the loneliness, he worked to such result that Kenyon, head of Residency No. 8, who had been sent out to report the progress of work at the Mattawishkwia, found himself wondering what manner of man was this Feroux who had accomplished deeds that Ned Bannister, chief of division, had declared impossible of achievement.

Kenyon was a quiet Englishman who took Jean Feroux's measure in an hour. In two days he had built with the boy the foundations of that friendship destined to be famous among the many splendid comradeships of the service. Within a fortnight Kenyon had secured Jean's transfer to his own residency on the Frederick House River where O'Hara and Steve MacDonald, Randall and Donald Ferguson accepted him into their Homeric councils with a hearty good-will that amazed the boy whose pride of race had kept him alien to all associations not of his own people. The men of Eight laughed away his tragic tensity with good-humored mirth. They bantered him on his fastidiousness; they scoffed at and borrowed from his wardrobe; but they praised his work and never jeered at his seldom-expressed opinions. They taught him the labor-saving tricks of their trade. They warned him of slave-driving chiefs and gave him the fruits of their garnered wisdom. They took him to the dances in Groundhog, that flat little junction town that had been hewn out of the Bush where the railroad from the south came up from Cobalt to meet the Right-of-Way. They established him under the patronage of the Widow and Bella Martin. They won for him the good-will of Mrs. Montresor's sister by informing that student of the peerage of the lineage of the Feroux. They advised him to fall in love with Molly Law and they counselled him against the wiles of Mabel Klondike when they saw the Circe of the coffee counter smiling at him. They told him tales of the big world through which they had wandered and unconsciously they sowed in his brain the seed of a new ideal of labor, for four of them were engineers because they loved the work, and the fifth was there because he had an Irishman's appreciation of the joys of the life.

The first month in the Residency came to Jean Feroux as a glorious vacation from the camp at the Mattawishkwia. Then a sudden, inexplicable rush of homesickness overwhelmed him and the bitter knowledge that his weakness could discover him in this stronghold of companionship would have sent him home had it not been for Kenyon's need of him for the work. For Kenyon he worked with the power of two men and the spirit of an army, and with the help of Kenyon and the building of the bridge he won.

The building of the bridge spread the fame of Jean Feroux along the Right-of-Way from Nova Scotia to Saskatchewan. The men of Eight had built a pier in the Frederick House River according to the specifications sent them by Ned Bannister. The first ice of the winter spun the structure downstream. Bannister sent new

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specifications and a reprimand. Kenyon gave Jean Feroux the specifications and kept the reprimand to himself. Jean directed the work in exact accordance with the plans, although he doubted the infallibility of Bannister, remembering that the Chief had not been without responsibility for the fall of the bridge near Chaudiere. The work took ten weeks longer than the specified time because of a current in the river that Bannister had failed to take into account. Three days after the pier was finished the Indians upriver sent down a log jam. The pier joined the logs.

O'Hara swore mightily. Steve MacDonald failed to laugh. Randall chattered like an angry magpie. Donald Ferguson smoked lustily. Kenyon, saying nothing, watched the river broodingly. Jean Feroux pored over blue prints all night, then tore them into ribbons and at dawn went out on the shaky falsework of the logs, shouting on his way an order to the Russian foreman.

Ten minutes later a gang of laborers were dragging bags of cement from the storehouse and forming a line to the boy at the end of the logs. Jean Feroux threw off his coat, jammed down his hat, and cast the first bag of cement into the rushing torrent of the river. There was nothing spectacular about the work, only a boy on a treacherously slippery footing flinging down bag after bag of cement with unerring aim in the place where the pier of the bridge had been. But morning ran to afternoon and afternoon to twilight and Jean Feroux was still at work. Kenyon found him tired, hungry, chilled, but unflagging when he crept out to take him coffee and an offer of help that Jean refused. "It's my work," the boy told him stolidly, "and I'm going to finish it."

By the flare of torches that Kenyon and the foreman set on the falsework Jean continued his labor. About midnight a storm crashed down from the north and in spite of Kenyon's commands the men refused to venture from the shore. Jean Feroux worked alone with the materials they had already brought him, assuring Kenyon that he could do better without him. The first reddening light of the cold North Country dawn showed the boy up to his waist in water. Kenyon sent the men back to their tasks and stood ready to plunge forward at the first indication of fatigue from Jean. But the hours went by with steady drive of pounding work, but with no sign of having conquered the worker till they numbered thirty-two, before Jean Feroux crawled back to the shore and crept up to the Residency.

"That pier is going to stay built," was all he said. Then he fell on his bunk and raved for a week of gray mist, and towers, and citadels, and lights, and the hill of San Sebastien.

The time that proved that the pier of Jean Feroux's bridge was to stay built dragged wearily for the boy himself. The reaction from the excitement of activity in completing the structure plunged him into despair of the fulfilment of his ambitions. When months passed without a word from the Chief in recognition of his work he began to question himself if the game were worth the candle. He knew that he had already won a higher score of success than most of his fellows, but he saw many men in the north doing great work without reward and with little hope of reward. The two years of his exile now seemed to him ones of profitless toil. The boyish thrill of achievement that he had brought to the Bush had died in the daily routine of the camps. The time had passed when hope of laurel could stir him to the depths of his soul. Discouraged in his ambition and homesick in his heart, he had come to a crisis of decision between desire to return to Quebec and a deep pride that scorned retreat when he had once set forward. Kenyon and O'Hara recognized his struggle and to each other deplored their inability to help him.

"He'll get over it," said O'Hara one night when Jean had left them to throw himself face downward on his bunk, "but I'm wondherin' how."

"But will he?" doubted Kenyon. "Nothing can give back to Jean the spirit he had when I found him at Mattawishkwia—nothing but a miracle. And miracles don't happen in these days."

"Anything may happen in the North Country," said O'Hara. And in the next week, as if to prove the Irishman a prophet as well as a philosopher, the miracle happened.

There were girls in Groundhog before Rosalie Burt came. Mabel Klondike

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served weak smiles and weaker coffee in the tent restaurant near the Fauquier camp. Lily Kelly, a high-voiced blonde from Penetang, remained the constant visitor of the Burkes. Mrs. Montresor's sister, wearing an Alexandra fringe, a velvet bodice, and a remembrance of the first families of Ottawa, languished by the drum stove in the winter and on the five-foot piazza in the summer. The Widow mothered every lonely lad on the Right-of-Way from the Quebec Province line to the Kakinakagami River, while Bella Martin, her chief aid in the crowded little hotel, held the centre of the comedy stage in the social theatre of the construction camps. Molly Law reigned princess royal of the Hudson Bay district. A dozen little French-Canadian *jeunes filles* cast entranced and entrancing glances at the railroad builders with whom their conservative parents forbade them discourse. But when Rosalie Burt stepped from the jerkwater train into the mellow circle of light that the station agent's lantern cast on the platform of the Groundhog terminal Kenyon, and O'Hara, and Randall, and Steve MacDonald, and little Jean Feroux knew that for years the Bush had been a desert ungraced by the kind of girl they'd write home about.

"She's a Dream," said little Jean Feroux with a quick intake of his breath. And The Dream she was to Groundhog for the rest of the time she stayed there and to Jean Feroux for the rest of the days of his life. For Rosalie Burt was lovely with that quality of beauty that made old men remember their youth when they looked at her. If her charm had a little of the hardness as well as all the brilliancy of the diamond Kenyon and O'Hara were the only ones of the five with experience enough to appraise her type. The others, young and daring privates of the level and the line, gazed at her as the elders of Troy looked on the face that had launched a thousand ships—till they saw Ned Bannister standing behind her. Then with sudden recollection that their errand to Groundhog that night was far outside the range of official business—they had come down to agitate the question of a long-desired dance—they all retired to the shadows of the freight room.

While Randall, savagely conscious of being two days behind on his concrete reports, muttered imprecations on the scouts of Residency No. 6 for their misinformation to him that Bannister had gone to Montreal, the others watched the Chief marshal his party. With The Dream was a tall young woman in an English greatcoat and a bored young man who clung to his fishing rods as if fearful of highway robbery. Bannister, holding the agent's lantern, plunged into the darkness outside the platform and the three strangers followed his guiding light as it moved over ditches, and tracks, and road oozy with the clay of the Bush.

"They're going to the Widow's," announced Steve MacDonald.

"Who would have thought that Neddie Bannister would ever come to the pass of being ladies' guide?" O'Hara asked the freight-room roof. "It all comes of getting fat, I fear. When I first knew him in Calgary he wouldn't let a petticoat within a mile of the camp. He was as vicious a woman-hater as Rhoderic Dhu Mac Pherson, factor of Old Brunswick. He would——"

"They may be relatives," suggested MacDonald.

"In his lean days I've heard Neddie discourse of his female relatives," said O'Hara. "If these were any of them, he'd still be going to Montreal."

"If they only were!" Randall returned to his grievance.

"If there's anything to be known," Steve MacDonald remarked as they watched the lantern light glimmer down to a speck, "Bella Martin will know it." And as if on one impulse the men of Eight started on the short cut to the Widow's hotel.

There was no one visible in the restaurant that was hotel office as well when they arrived at the shambling two-story building, but they heard Bella Martin haranguing the cook and they seated themselves in line on the wooden sidewalk to await her.

"*The Bulletin* of the Bush will soon go to press," was O'Hara's comment as Bella's voice rose strident on the stillness.

"How do you suppose those two girls ever happened to come here?" inquired Steve.

"They probably saw you when you went out," Randall answered, "and have been following you ever since."

"Oh, I'm sure I never saw them," said Steve.

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"Modesty, thy name is MacDonald," O'Hara declaimed, "though 'tis possible that Neddie Bannister brought them hither to exploit his glory. We'll be the working supernumeraries in the big tent show."

"The Chief isn't that sort," said Kenyon quietly.

"Why does he come now?" Randall made moan. "I'm two days behind on those reports and it's the first time that——"

"I'll help you, Ran," Kenyon volunteered.

"And I," said Steve.

"Don't be rash," O'Hara objected. "Remember that we'll have work even in Heaven and that we haven't seen girls like these since we came here. For me own part I intend to remain a permanent fixture of this broad boulevard while youth and beauty tarry in Groundhog."

"Girls may come
And girls may go,
But work goes on forever,"

sighed Randall to the moon that was just falling below the western rim of stunted pines.

"They've even inspired him to verse," O'Hara mused, "and they've struck Jean dumb as a Hindu at a Viceroy's reception. Can't ye even express your emotions in French, me boy? Ye won't? Then Neddie Bannister might just as well proclaim a general holiday. Ah, *The Bulletin* arrives!" he announced as the key clicked in the door behind them and Bella Martin came out, pushing her hair back from her round face with a gesture of utter weariness.

The five engineers saluted her with the certainty of good-fellowship but Bella's disgust with the cook extended to them, and even the diplomacy of O'Hara proved of no avail till he held out to her bait of news from Donald Ferguson, the object of her particular interest in the corps, who had been for four weeks at the Kakinakagami. By the terms of the Irishman's treaty Bella responded with all her newly acquired information about Bannister's companions. They were from Ottawa, Mrs. Lantry, the tall woman, who was to marry Bannister, her sister, Rosalie Burt, and their brother, and had been diverted from a fishing trip at Temagami by a chance meeting with the Chief. They were to remain a week in Groundhog while the Chief went below the Abitibi. Mrs. Montresor's sister knew them—of course—and would call on them even if they were at the Widow's hotel. And they had clothes enough to serve them on a journey to the head of Hudson Bay. As a reward for these items the engineers told Bella that Donald Ferguson had been ordered in to the Residency. Bella's pleasure took concrete form. "Let's have that dance," she suggested.

"Would they come?" asked Kenyon.

"Who?" demanded Bella. "The ladies? There never yet was a girl who wouldn't go to a dance where there were twenty good-looking men to every petticoat. Is it a dance?"

"Right-O!" four of them chorused so loudly that Jean Feroux's continued silence passed unnoticed.

"Go ahead, Bella," urged Steve MacDonald. "We'll have it next Tuesday night, eh, fellows? We'll use the new store and get a fiddler from the French town. Will you find out if we can get our laundry back from North Bay in time?"

"You're great on orders, Mac," sighed Bella, "with me to do all the work. Well, I suppose I will if you keep Don over for the show." She appealed to Kenyon and he promised her readily. "Lost your tongue, Jean Feroux?" she asked suddenly, then, without waiting for an answer from any of them, locked the door after she had announced that she'd have to stay up all night to iron her pink dimity for Donald Ferguson's return.

"Did ye notice," O'Hara asked Kenyon as they followed the others to the railroad, "that Jean hasn't said one word this night since The Dream came?"

"Do you think——"

"I know," said O'Hara. "I saw the look in his eyes while he watched her. Love is a wonderful illusion, Ken."

"Illusion enough," said Kenyon. "But isn't the illusion yours, Brian Boru? Do you think that Jean would lose his heart at first sight of a pretty girl? He's seen too many pretty girls in his Quebec."

"Two years ago," O'Hara argued. "And a girl in the Bush is worth ten in the town. Listen to him!" he ended triumphantly as Jean's clear whistle floated back to them, a joyous trill of the popular ditty that had come to be the song of the boys in the Bush:

"*Gee, I wish that I had a girl like the other fellows have.*"

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"'Twill be a wild week," said O'Hara.

"Poor Jean!" said Kenyon.

When Randall discovered next day that Jean Feroux had gone to Groundhog alone he declared it time to close the books on the betting. "He's met her already," he asserted. But when O'Hara and Steve MacDonald went down to the town they could find no trace of Jean. Neither did they see The Dream, although they met Mrs. Lantry walking with two camp doctors. Bella Martin proved singularly uncommunicative and they left her with threats of vengeance, going to Molly Law's. Molly was human enough to resent their intense interest in another girl and even when they had excited her with the idea of the dance they acquired from her no information about Rosalie Burt. But when they came to the track on their way back to the Residency they found Jean lifting his speeder to the rails.

"Been here all evening?" Steve asked him.

"I've been canoeing," said Jean, pride struggling with reticence.

"I saw Mabel Klondike in some sort of a sailor costume," remarked O'Hara with a silkiness that should have put the boy on guard.

"I wasn't with her," Jean protested hotly. "You know I never asked her anywhere. To-night"— he paused to give them the full effect of his surprising declaration—"I was with Miss Burt."

"How did you meet her?" gasped Steve.

"Mrs. Montresor's sister took me to call," Jean said.

O'Hara sank down limply on his handcar and laughed till the tears rolled down his cheeks. "You're wasthed on the engineering, me boy," he said when he could speak. "'Tis in the diplomathic sarvice ye should be. Mrs. Montresor's sister!" Steve MacDonald's great laugh joined the Irishman's chuckles and their gigantic mirth followed the boy as he sent the speeder out with quick stroke.

But little Jean Feroux, speeding beyond sound of their jeering calls, had no thought of laughter. As swiftly as summer comes to the North Country love had come to the lonely life of the boy. Yesterday had been to him as twice ten-score other yesterdays, gray with dismal routine of employment that meant nothing and led nowhere; but to-day was a day of glorious glow, for to the dark and dreary Bush had come a girl whose golden gleaming eyes and golden April laughter had banished the winter from the mood of Jean Feroux, unfolding like springtime sunshine all the hard-folded beauties he had cherished beneath the snowcrust of his youth. Last night she had come to Groundhog. To-night she had been at the prow of his canoe as he sent the birchbark upriver with sure paddle. She had asked him many questions of the land and of the life; and divining her interest he made the pictures he painted for her vivid with the old thrill that had been dead till the girl, stirred by the awe of the night of the north and swept by the throb of the boyish epic of labor in those wilds, had leaned toward him with eyes shining more brightly than the moonlight in the wake of their canoe.

"Oh, you're splendid," she cried, "you men who blaze the ways of the world—splendid!"

Then all the old ambition, the old courage, and the old hope, intensified a hundredfold, came back to Jean Feroux. Now as he whirled the speeder down the wide path through the gloomy forest he made to himself a vow of service for the sake of the girl who was to be the one woman in his life. "I'll work," he told himself, and the pines, and the stars. "I'll work and I'll win—for her!"

The next day Jean commanded a grading gang with the zest of a captain of cavalry going into battle. Kenyon, who had, rightly or wrongly, estimated Rosalie Burt as a provincial belle with social ambition that no Bush engineer, even though he were a Quebec Feroux, would ever satisfy, showed his sympathy for Jean's infatuation by giving him unwonted praise for his work; and with the joy of a task well done added to the joy of anticipation Jean went down to Groundhog again that night. And again Rosalie Burt went with him on the river.

Fate, Gwen Lantry, and the absence of Ned Bannister gave the boy five glamorous nights of enchanted silences on the river with the girl. There came a last night of all when under a glistening sky where Northern Lights flamed and flared like towering thoughts of prayer he tried to tell her what she was to him. Once Rosalie

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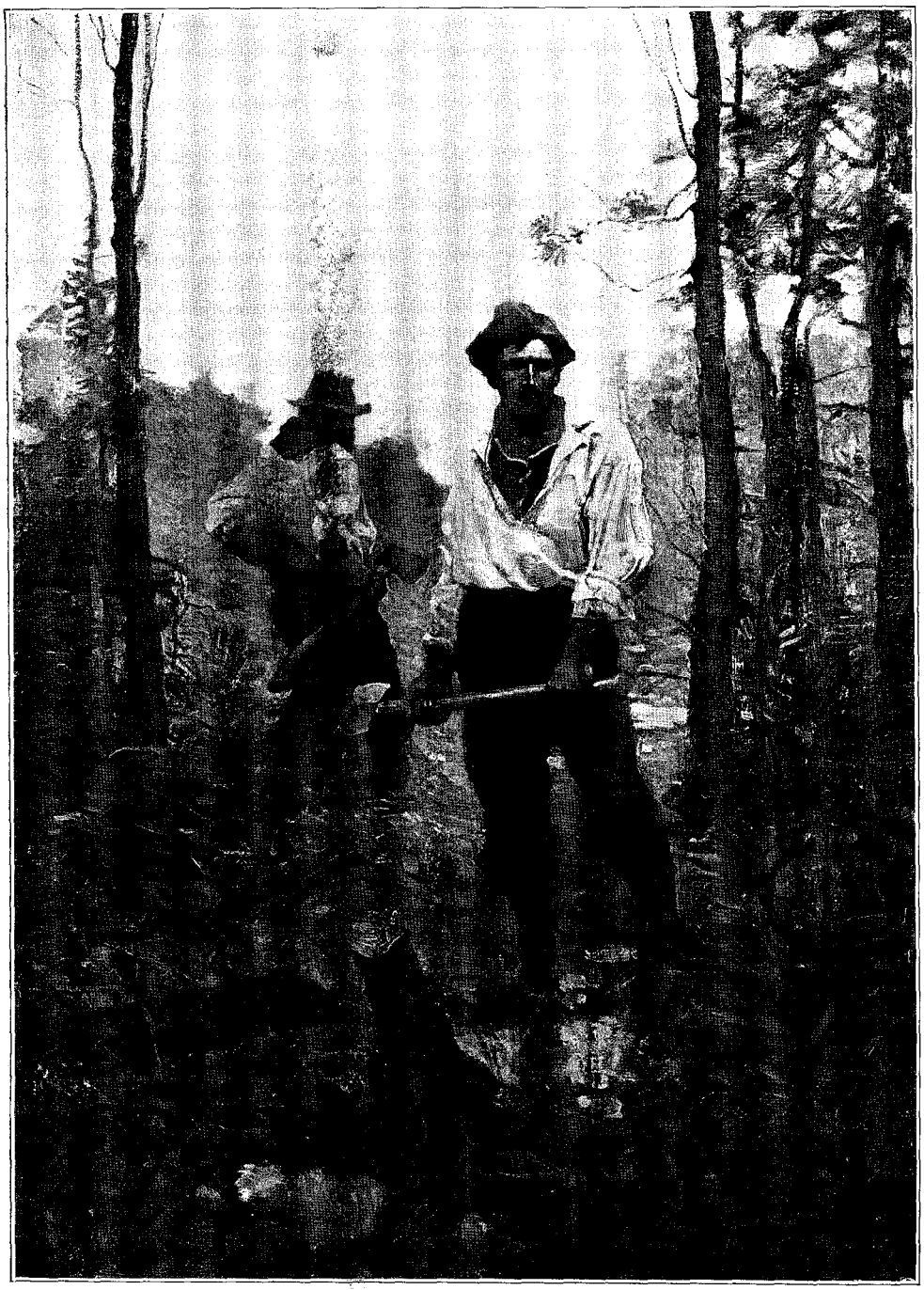

Drawn by N. C. Wyeth.

For three months he worked as an axeman . . . his only companion a dour Scotchman who never spoke.—Page 723.

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Burt strove to stem the tide of his speech when with the golden lights of her eyes clouded in misery and doubt she promised him his answer on the morrow.

"But the dance is to-morrow night," he protested, "and you'll go to that."

"I'll tell you then," she declared.

"Answer me now," he begged. "Won't you let me work for you?" he persisted. "I'll win, win big, dear, honestly, I will."

"I believe you will," said the girl, "but success is so long in coming in this work. Isn't there some other way?"

The boy puzzled a moment. "No," he said, "there is no other way. It's my work now. I've gone through too much for it to give it up. But I want it to be for you. Won't you let it be?"

"I don't know," she said. "I have to think. I'll tell you to-morrow," she repeated. And with that he had to be content. But as he went back to the Residency the remembrance of how her eyes had softened to tenderness as she bade him good-by made the way between the pines a path of light leading to the stars.

Through the days that Jean Feroux spent in work and dreams of work for Rosalie Burt, Bella Martin was rousing the camps of the North Country with the promise of a dance that should rival all other social functions Groundhog had ever aspired to. Donald Ferguson, returned to the Frederick House Residency, was dazzled by the ingenuity and pink dimity of Bella into giving active assistance. He engaged the fiddlers from the French town, ordered ice cream from Haileybury, and mineral water from Toronto, and zealously aided in the cleaning of the store, the waxing of the floor, and the negotiations for the loan of Mrs. Montresor's piano. He had help and hindrance in plenty from town and residencies, and with work, and play, and love, and laughter the great night of Groundhog rose in the zenith for some four-score boyish engineers, some half-score women, for Jean Feroux and for Rosalie Burt.

Ballantine from the Mattawishkwia, informed of the dance by an Indian from Conjuror's House, was the first of the men from the far camps to come to Groundhog. Cameron, and Veronceau, and Coleridge arrived from the west as the Abitibi contingent dropped from the Steel Train. An hour later the train from the south, rushing in an hour ahead of schedule, brought the Matheson delegation just before the Frederick House crowd, all but Jean Feroux, threw their handcars from the track and made their way to the Widow's.

Mrs. Montresor's sister, Lily Kelly, Mabel Klondike, and Molly Law waited in armed truce in the store, while the sidewalk outside the Widow's resembled a roll-call of the Transcontinental residencies. Gwen Lantry, coming out with Rosalie Burt, called to her sister laughingly, "It's a summer resort turned inside out! Who ever saw so many men at a dance?" But Rosalie Burt's eyes went over the crowd as if seeking some one she did not find; and just then Jean Feroux came up the street with Ned Bannister.

Bella Martin, leading the crowd down the narrow walk, surveyed the result of her labor with swelling pride as she came to the door of the improvised ballroom. Under the light of six kerosene lamps the floor shone white with scattered wax. Pine boughs and flaring posters vied in concealing the bareness of the wooden walls. Blankets covered the line of trunks that served as seats. In a corner an oily-haired man ruthlessly pounded the piano of Mrs. Montresor. At his side two fiddlers sawed sharply on squeaky fiddles, calling out intermittently in nasal *patois*.

On the floor dancers were already moving. Mabel Klondike, waltzing with the manager of the Hudson Bay Company's store, gave Jean Feroux a glance of fiery scorn, remembering his curt refusal of her request to bring her to the dance. Lily Kelly shrilled her high-pitched laugh at the sight of sixty men filing through the low doorway and Steve MacDonald mimicked her boisterously. Mrs. Montresor's sister abducted Coleridge to a corner. The Widow, encircled by a dozen bronzed boys, was promising to dance with them all at once. Rosalie Burt, standing between Bannister and Jean Feroux, roused herself with visible effort to smile at the attentions of a score of other men.

A big fellow from the line beyond the Abitibi came through the doorway, bearing the only watermelon Groundhog had seen that summer. He pushed his way across the room to Gwen Lantry's court. "The fellows bought up all the candy in town for

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Drawn by N. C. Wyeth.

She leaned toward him with eyes shining more brightly than the moonlight in the wake of their canoe. "Oh, you're splendid."—Page 728.

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your sister," he told her gravely, "and so I've brought you this." And in the shout of laughter that greeted his gift the dance at Groundhog began.

The man at Mrs. Montresor's piano could play but one tune. The fiddles creaked on one key. But on the floor men who had danced in London ballrooms, men who had danced at court in St. Petersburg, men who had been taught in far-away Scotch homes that dancing is a device of the De'il, and men who had danced from childhood in the French carnivals of Lower Canada joined steps grotesque and steps graceful. Lucky was the man who won a girl for the dance, since, impartial as they might be, the few women could not distribute their dances to include all. "I was born unfortunate," mourned Ballantine as he took to whirling with a Russian nobleman whose daily work was bridge inspection at the Opazitika.

The floor was overcrowded, but the long line of watchers displeased Bella Martin. "We'll have a dance every one can be in," she cried in a pause of the breathless rounds of a Canadian waltz. "Come on, a square dance!"

"Right-O!" came the ready answer from the wallflowers and in another moment the sets had gathered. O'Hara and Kenyon alone refused Bella's invitation. "I'd rather watch," O'Hara said, nodding to the square where Gwen Lantry, and the Chief, Steve MacDonald and Molly Law, Randall and Mabel Klondike, and Jean Feroux and Rosalie Burt waited the fiddler's call to begin the old-fashioned quadrille.

"The Dream isn't as happy as you'd expect," O'Hara remarked to Kenyon, "with twenty men eager to serve her and two men ready to die for her."

"Who besides Jean?" Kenyon inquired.

"I leave it to your perceptions to discover," O'Hara chuckled. "Meantime, watch Mrs. Lantry amusing Neddie. How I wish the old Calgary crowd could see him dancing this!"

"*Salut, messieurs et dames,*" rose the fiddler's call.

"Salute your partners!" A big engineer from the Abitibi translated the softer phrase. With the grace of a cavalier Jean Feroux went through the stately figures of the old dance with Rosalie Burt, speaking to her with low-toned earnestness, smiling at her with wooing tenderness. Once they mistook a call and Mabel Klondike reproved them so sharply that Bannister, attracted by the incident, watched them closely. Once Rosalie Burt threw the Chief a little wide glance of understanding after she had pouted at her sister's refusal of her request to change the square dance to a two-step. His scowl seemed to rouse her pique, for in an instant seized from the advantage of Steve MacDonald's mistake in crossing Jean Feroux was guiding the girl in a rollicking gallop through the crowded room in and out between the dancers of the older measure.

"'Tis young Lochinvar," said O'Hara. "Who would have thought that our little Jean could win her away from the many material charms of Neddie Bannister?"

"Bannister?" Kenyon puzzled. "I thought the Chief was to marry Mrs. Lantry."

"No, 'tis The Dream," said the Irishman. "Neddie himself told me, but I've been hoping she was young enough to be brave, though 'tis bred in the bone with her social set to kow-tow to the idols of place and power." He smiled genially at Feroux as he whirled the girl past them, but he turned back to Kenyon with whimsical sadness in his voice. "Dreams so seldom come true," he said, "that I know she can't come true for the boy. And he's the best of us all, Ken."

"Jean's a good boy," said Kenyon.

"Oh, you English!" sighed O'Hara. "You'd give a decade of your span of years to make Jean happy and you talk of him as if he were your caddy. Well, he's happy enough just now. He's forgotten Quebec's on the map of the world."

"He'll remember," said Kenyon.

"Britain, croak on!" laughed O'Hara, "but look at that while ye may. Perhaps, after all——"

Flushed with delight Jean had brought back Rosalie Burt to the side of the broken square where the other six waited for them, Steve MacDonald and Molly Law with amused sympathy, Mabel Klondike with distinct contempt, Randall with frank commendation of their defiance of the conventions of Groundhog society, Bannister with scowling indignation, and Gwen Lantry with reproving silence, though her eyes softened as they rested on Jean Feroux's radiant face.

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He looked at no one but Rosalie Burt, but the girl had followed her sister's warning nod and met the angry glare of the Chief. "Shall we break it up altogether?" Randall was eagerly asking her. "Come on, Miss Burt. When they change partners in Allemande Left—it's the next call—I'll two-step with Mabel and you dance off with Jean. We'll turn this into a real dance. Who wants these stiff sets?"

"Let's do it," Jean pleaded. "Come with me, Rosalie." But the girl at his side did not answer.

"Won't you?" begged the boy. "You haven't told me yet and I'm waiting, you know." His eyes shouted what his lips dared not say.

"We'll break it up," urged Randall. "This is stupid."

"Come with me!" Jean Feroux's plea was for more than the dance. "Stay my partner—forever. He's calling it now. Won't you come?"

"Allemande—allemande—allemande!" chanted the fiddler.

"Alleman' Left!" The call resounded back and forth under the low ceiling. "Change partners, everybody!"

Jean Feroux turned to Rosalie Burt with outstretched hands, but as she hesitated, silent and abashed while a slow flush of color burned in her cheeks, Mabel Klondike caught him from the other side. "Oh, change!" she cried stridently. "Rosalie!" he said, but she turned away from him. With his eyes still watching Rosalie Burt he turned to the Groundhog Circe with a show of obsequious gallantry. He saw the flash of Rosalie Burt's gown pass him before he found Mabel Klondike staring at him with the calculating spite of wounded vanity. She laughed sneeringly as she looked over his shoulder. "Two can play at your game, Monsieur Feroux," she said. "Miss Burt has just gone out with Mr. Bannister."

All the pride of his people rose in Jean Feroux to meet the need of pride. For he needed no words to assure him that this was the answer of Rosalie Burt. In a flash of vision he saw the truth that his love for her had hidden from him. Rosalie Burt, not Gwen Lantry, was to marry the Chief and he, Jean Feroux, had been a blind fool led by her caprice. With his house of hope crashing in ruins about him he smiled at Mabel Klondike as bravely as if she had not been the willing weapon with which fate had pinioned him and he turned to Gwen Lantry with the bow of a grand seigneur, knowing that every dancer in the room had stopped to watch the play. "Isn't this our dance?" he asked her.

"Yes," she said with a little gasp of relief and sympathy under which his quickened perception winced. "We'll follow them." And with a gay disdain of the watching crowd they waltzed from the room.

Outside in the moonlight they saw a man and a girl a little distance down the river road. Gwen Lantry looked after them thoughtfully, then held out her hand to Jean. "You're a thoroughbred," she said swiftly. "Rosalie's my sister, but she hasn't been square with you. She's young, though, and Ned was angry and she didn't dare break with him."

"Why not?" Jean asked tensely.

"She's to marry him, you know, and——"

"I didn't know till now," he told her. "I thought it was you. Some one said that——"

"It was never I," said Gwen Lantry. "I hope it won't hurt long, Jean."

"Oh, it's all in a summer," said Jean Feroux.

"And there will be so many summers for you," said the woman. "Jean," she added suddenly, "for your own sake, don't think too hard of Rosalie. There are reasons why——"

"I think I know them," he said quietly. "But don't you think that there are other things to live for besides luxury?"

"Yes," said Gwen Lantry, "but Rose and I need that most of all. She couldn't be happy up here with any one, and this is your only way up, isn't it? Don't you see?"

"I see," he replied. He turned away sharply and Gwen Lantry watched him go down the moonlit road with head defiantly high and shoulders defiantly square as he bravely whistled the song he had trilled on the night when Rosalie Burt came to the Bush.

He whistled while he dragged the speeder to the track. He whistled as he sent it spinning down the steel along the bright path that the setting moon made in the clearing between the dark shadows of the low forest. Still whistling, he passed a forest ranger's hut and crossed three culverts. But when he came to the trestle of his bridge over the

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Frederick House the whistle suddenly ended. He threw the brake of the speeder and brought the car to pulsing attention, noting his surroundings for the first time since he left Groundhog and looking on the familiar scene with eyes that had grown alien to it.

Back of him shone the Steel, before him the Right-of-Way narrowed into the darkness. The moon had gone down and the morning star gleamed above the trees across the river. From the dizzy height of the framework he gazed down on the white birches looming like phantoms against the blackness of pine and spruce, on the log houses of the Residency nestled in the clearing, and on the pier of the bridge that he had built.

He listened dully to the roar of the river from the rapids above, to the hushed tremors of the pines, to the thousand rustling sounds of the underbrush. Dully he felt that this was the same world that he had known for two years. Something that had flashed on that world for a brief time, making it scintillant as the Lights made bright the whole North Country, was *gone* now, leaving the world as dark as the gloomiest night on the Bush. Loneliness and longing, the drear ache of old homesickness, and the stronger, stranger ache of new loss swept over Jean Feroux.

Memories of the splendid career that Rosalie Burt should inspire shrieked jeeringly at him in the wailing winds. Thoughts of the house of life he had planned for her came back to taunt him with their futility. The rush of the river was a torrent of fate whirling down the ruins of his hope. "It's all gone," he moaned his first word since he had spoken to Gwen Lantry, "gone as the pier went before the logs." His hands gripped the bar of the speeder as the memory of the crash of the pier marshalled his thoughts toward the road of his labors. "But you built another," he told himself with sudden emphasis and as if he were another man, "and it stayed built. That's it!" he cried. "It stayed built!" He rose in the speeder, looking forward toward the dim apex of the Right-of-Way and raising his voice in a curious exulting: "You'll do it again—you'll build another. It's Allemande Left for you, Jean Feroux. Change partners, *nageons, nos gens!* Work as the old Feroux did, for the greatness of your country and the glory of your name—for it is a great country and it is a glorious name. Work for your work and not for a woman and you're going to win!"

"You're going to win," he repeated over and over in the way of a child. With that strange clairvoyance of vision that sometimes comes to men who have lived in the wild places he saw the road of his life before him, a narrow trail through wildernesses of the world where he pushed onward, blazing the ways of empire. He heard faint whispers of the praise of men who would follow on his path, but he knew that far behind him would ever lie the life he loved, the quick, responsive thrill of the city where his old crowd pursued their old ways. Just as the Feroux of the Old France had left their beloved Normandy for the new lands of the West, he was leaving forever the world they had founded and setting forth to a world of conquest, and adventure, and the work of men. Not now with boyish bravado, not now with memories of another's ambitions, not with stubborn decision, not with dreams of glory blazoned in bronze nor with hope of woman's love, but with the calm exaltation of faith that this was the task toward which his life had been directed and that he should not fail in its accomplishment, Jean Feroux entered the province of his manhood. Once he looked back in the thought that the lands he would come to would never be quite as dear as the land he must leave, and all his boyish home longing surged into the sadness of remembering the song of the hill of San Sebastien. But the light of his purpose shone before him steady as the beams of the morning star. For through love, and sorrow, and loss Jean Feroux had found the high road of his course with the compass of knowledge that for him work was greater than woman and that the bridges of life spanned the rivers of eternity.

When Kenyon, and O'Hara, and Donald Ferguson, Randall, and Steve MacDonald went down to Groundhog the next night Jean Feroux, alone at the Residency, watched their handcars thread the trestle. Over the rush of the river he heard Ferguson's whistle. A little while he mused, smoking savagely as he listened to the softening strain; but when the brooding winds of the Bush had garnered all lesser sounds within their sighing he went in from the starlit, pine-odored night of the north to the bare little shack where he set himself to the making of maps.

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OLD JOHNNIE

By Barry Benefield

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JOHN SLOAN

JOHNNIE—his name was John, of course, but he was small and gentle and affable—that morning walked into the Broadway office of the Eastern Pacific Railroad, where only figures are handled, hung up his coat and hat on the hook by his desk, drew on a pair of black sleeve-protectors and sat down to bury himself in tonnage calculations. This is the last day he will be the same Johnnie, and may be you would like to consider him before the change begins.

This office was then in charge of a division freight agent, a congenital miser, whose only hope of advancement lay in holding down expenses, and it was an axiom there that every man should get out of it as soon as he could. Men were constantly leaving, but the agent relied on refilling his clerical staff, through newspaper advertisements, from the great army of downcast unemployed strangers in New York, and cheaply. It doesn't matter what ambitions were in Johnnie's mind when he came up from Touraine, La., to the city; one of these advertisements had brought him, with his first hopes dead, to the Eastern Pacific office.

Anybody with a high-school training can begin work there, if he can live on the salary. Johnnie just could. Up through four grades he rose—or drifted, rather—until now he was tonnage clerk at twenty dollars a week. In the beginning the salary was eight dollars.

It was 2 P. M. on this day that Johnnie rose from his desk, as usual, to stretch and snatch a smoke in the washroom. Passing down the middle aisle, he came near the office-boys' bench.

"Who's he?" he heard a new boy ask.

"Old Johnnie, the tonnage clerk," several hastened to reply. "Name's John Coutrier," went on the best-informed boy. "He's been here ten years, they say. They call him Old Johnnie when he ain't around."

Then they laughed.

The little tonnage clerk had never heard himself referred to in that way before. "Old Johnnie!" It exploded its meaning in his mind. In the vague way in which he had thought of himself he had considered himself a young man, though he had drifted on unobtrusively into time until he was now thirty-five years old.

He stood still in the dimly lighted washroom, the cold cigarette hanging in his mouth. There was an undefined shame in his soul that numbed him. If the boy had said, "Everybody knows he's a thief," it could not have stunned him more.

Striking the match he had taken out of his pocket for the cigarette, he held it before the dingy mirror in the wall, and pushing his face close to the glass scrutinized himself. The thinning hair above the forehead, the touch of gray on the temples, the curious little wrinkles at the corners of his eyes, the settling of the lines of his face, the slight downward curve of the corners of his mouth—did not all these cry out in corroboration of the frightful implications in the office-boy epithet?

"Thirty-five years old, four hundred dollars in the savings bank, twenty dollars a week, a boarding-house bachelor!"

He repeated this summary three or four times, then threw down his cold cigarette and went back to his desk. Two weeks later he gave the veteran office-boy who had explained him a five-dollar Christmas present.

"Old Johnnie!" It did not lose its effect on the little tonnage clerk with the passing of a few days. Constantly it exploded its implications in his mind, and amidst the upheaved débris there he saw again old shining ambitions that he longed to seize and save.

His routine of ten years began to fail to return its usual mild pleasure. He came to loathe the boarding-house and all its miscel-

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laneous company. The Sunday afternoon walks in Central Park, along Riverside Drive, and in the Bronx Park with casual acquaintances from the landlady's shifting foster family palled on him; he walked alone, choosing new parks and new streets.

A chum who could catch all the good in his passing remarks, a friend in whom he could trust implicitly, a comrade in whom he could be deeply and genuinely and worthily interested—now he knew that he had not had such a one in all the ten years he had been in New York. And he yearned for one. He was inexpressibly lonesome in the midst of five million people.

Even the Wednesday nights at the theatre no longer lifted him out of himself and sent him to the street elated. The illusions no longer took complete possession of him, for that office-boy epithet held him captive most of the time. He smiled sarcastically at the sign, "Family Circle," above the door of the second gallery, which he patronized, and in the middle of an act he would catch himself looking around in the obscurity at the sour old maids and the unspeakable old bachelors, murmuring to himself, "Family Circle—good God!"

The casual conversation of the married men in the office now enthralled Johnnie. Hemerich, the damage clerk, always brought cold lunch from home—though sometimes he didn't eat it—and Johnnie found himself dwelling tenderly on the imagined picture of Mrs. Hemerich getting the lunch ready of a morning.

Taking the earliest vacation assignment he could get, which was in June, Johnnie rode on his pass to his small home town, where his father had a store. Every year he had gone home to Touraine, been petted by his mother, fished a little and gone about some with an old schoolmate.

Some people said Alice was "getting to be an old maid," but Johnnie always thought of her as young. When it had come time to return to New York he would pack his suit-case in a fever of hurry and shake Alice's hand good-by in such haste that he never noticed the wistfulness in her face. Though the city took little account of him, he loved it with such a devoted passion that he could never stay long away from it in peace.

Surely you see why it was that Johnnie this year rushed back to Touraine in the spirit of his former rushes to New York. As the train passes the water-tank you can catch sight of the Duflot home, and the steeple of the Catholic church further across town. These thrilled Johnnie this year as never before. And this time he saw all that was in Alice's face, and it blotted out the office-boy epithet. Alice called him John.

There is no need to go into details about the marriage; about how the Touraine *Trumpet*, after an introductory paragraph concerning "joyous wedding-bells," referred to Johnnie splendidly as "tonnage expert of the Eastern Pacific Railroad," and to Alice gracefully as "one of our fairest flowers"; nor about how Amos, the aged 'bus driver, who drove them up to the midnight train, observed to the station-master, "It do beat the band how little men get fine, big women"; nor about the grand air of guardianship Johnnie assumed when Alice showed some trepidation in the presence of the stupendous city.

Half of Johnnie's four hundred dollars came out of the bank to furnish a three-room flat in South Brooklyn. Now he summarized himself thus: "Thirty-six years old, two hundred dollars in the bank, twenty-five dollars a week, a home and a wife—oh, such a wife!"

This summary had implications that steeled his spirit with pride, opened his imagination to the wide survey of resources and electrified his energies. To rise as high as possible in the Eastern Pacific and to get with a better-paying company—that was his plan of action. Johnnie was confident that he would carry it through in some gratifying measure of success, was happy that he was confident.

Alice had been in her flat four months when one night Johnnie walked in on her before she could dry the tears out of her gray eyes.

"I'm ashamed, John," she ran on hastily in explanation, "but I get so lonesome. I can do the work in the flat within an hour after you leave. Then what's ahead for me until you get back? Won't you stay home to-morrow? I'll get used to being alone after a while. I do wish you would let me go out and get a position in a department store. A lot of women do that, and it wouldn't tire me, John, and it would help along with the one thousand dollars."

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They had an agreement that there should be no baby in the house until there was that much in the bank.

"My wife must not work out," said Johnnie with a gentle majesty that came of his would take at least three dollars away from the one thousand dollars."

She dropped her eyes, and Johnnie walked around the table and kissed her reverently.

Pushing his face close to the glass scrutinized himself—did not all these cry out in corroboration of the frightful implications in the office-boy epithet?—Page 735.

new self. "As for the money, why, I'll work harder. And you must walk more in Prospect Park; that will do you good. And read more. We must find you some friends."

The next morning at breakfast Alice mocked at herself for "losing her balance," as she phrased it, insisting that Johnnie must not stay at home on her account.

"We can't lose a day's pay because of my disgraceful tears," she declared. "That

After that she seemed always overflowing with cheerfulness, so that Johnnie, reflecting upon what all day alone in a small flat in a strange city must mean to an ardent woman from the country, marvelled at her, and his love was touched with a solemn awe.

When the winter pressure of work in the office came on he told her of the opportunities for extra money that lay in overtime. She urged him to stay as late as his very good health permitted, not minding her. She

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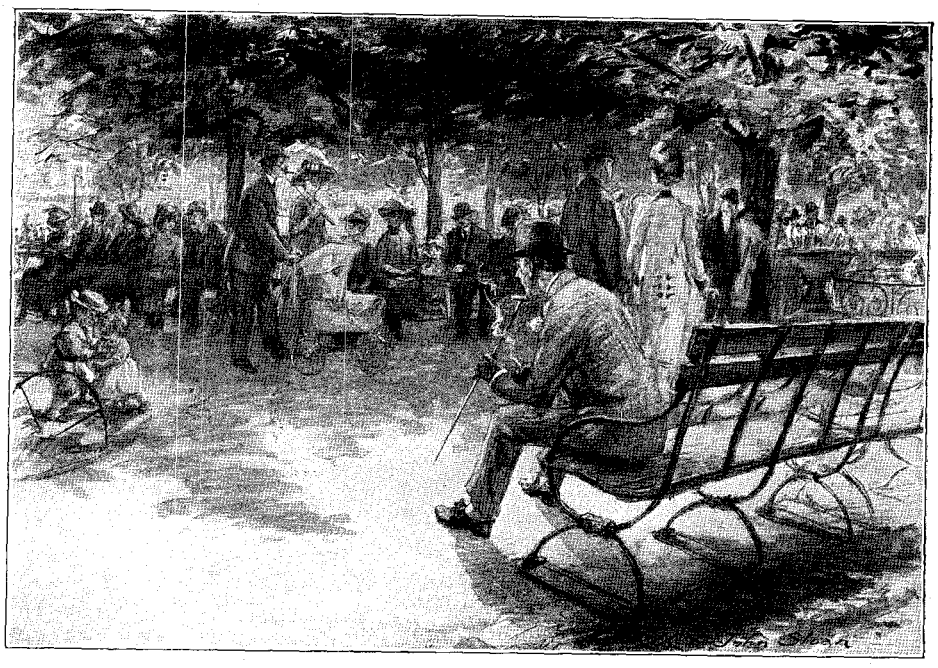

He was inexpressibly lonesome in the midst of five million people.—Page 736.

was going to be brave and happy. After all, they still had Sundays, some half-Saturdays and all the official holidays to themselves. O, Washington, Lincoln, patriots that made the Fourth of July, Presidents that proclaim Thanksgiving—how salaried employees in the great towns do love you! For do you not mean an extra holiday for them?

Johnnie did work overtime, and on the anniversary of their marriage he strode into the flat and put a board-backed savings-bank book on the table by her plate. Its contents had been his secret.

"Six hundred dollars, John," she murmured, brokenly, and rushed into the kitchen.

"I'm not boohooing, John," she denied when he followed her. "I'm no baby. There's been something in my eye all day long and I am trying to wash it out at the sink. That's all."

"But it *is* just fine, John," she said after she had sat down at table again. "You must have slaved."

"Nothing at all, my dear, nothing at all."

"And to think that you won't let me even launder your shirts."

"Nonsense; I'll not have you a drudge, Alice. You do too much already."

"There will be a thousand by Christmas," she said softly.

"Hardly that, but by next summer anyhow," he answered, his eyes burning over her.

Then came the winter with the overtime work again. The extra pay was by the hour, so that the inspired Johnnie often didn't get home until midnight. The bank account was nearing eight hundred dollars, would be quite that with his December salary, which was already half earned, leaving a plenty over for celebrating Christmas much more adequately than he and she had celebrated it the year before.

On a Monday night in the third week of December, his head throbbing with such pain that he could no longer see the figures on the book before him, Johnnie gave up the idea of attempting five additional hours that evening and started anxiously toward his home at 8.30 o'clock; the restfulness and peace there called to him these days. In the walk from the elevated-railroad station up the quiet street in which he lived his head cleared somewhat. The air was cold and clear and invigorating, and he decided to pace up and down in front of the flat for a few minutes, that he might get the good of more of the bracing air.

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"She must not see that I have been in pain," he mused. "It would worry her."

He walked slowly back and forth on the opposite side of the street, his eyes looking tenderly up at those two shaded windows on the third floor that marked their big chamber, the combination bed and sitting-room. What was she doing now? He tried to visualize her in the flat. Often of late she had been sitting down when he came in, a strange little smile on her face, with a book in her hands. That was only a pose, he knew; he always suspected then that she had been toiling in that wonderful kitchen of hers and that she had assumed the pose when he rang the vestibule bell just to make him think she had grown to be an insatiable reader.

Johnnie, his eyes on the windows, stopped, catching his breath. The wind leaped up and screamed around through the rows of flat-houses. There was oceans of air to breathe, but Johnnie could not open and close his lungs. His heart seemed to be in a spasm, then it seemed to be drying up. From some near-by parlor came the muted whine of a gramophone, from some kitchen the oniony odor of a belated dinner, and though only a little of these got through to Johnnie's consciousness he loathed that little with an unaccustomed intensity.

There she stood—Johnnie easily recognized every line of that dear head and figure behind the shades—with her hands on the shoulders of a figure he could not recognize. But this strange figure hadn't the bulk of head that a woman's hair gives. Was it a man? How tenderly now she touched the figure here and there! Then she put her arms around the shadowed neck, imprinted a kiss on the shadowed face, put her hands on the shoulders—and the two faded out of sight.

Johnnie's mind leaped loyally to an explanation. "Her brother has come for a Christmas visit," he breathed. And though she had said nothing about expecting him, Johnnie held to the idea of her brother.

"Oh, don't you worry, John," she ran on lightly as she helped him off with his overcoat.—Page 740.

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He almost shouted for joy at his divination. Whistling loudly, he strode across the street, rang the vestibule bell and went gayly up the two flights of stairs.

Alice was sitting demurely in her rocking-chair with that book in her hands. Johnnie stood silent inside the door for a minute. She got up and walked toward him.

"Hold still, boy, and let me kiss you," she said severely. "You are dodging me now."

"No, I'm tired," he parried wearily. "That's the reason I came home early; I planned to work late to-night. All alone to-day?"

"All except my book. Oh, don't you worry, John," she ran on lightly as she helped him off with his overcoat. "I'm not letting myself get sad and lonesome as I did at first. I go out to the park and take a lot of exercise. I like to see the people, though I didn't used to, you know. I think I'll be a regular New Yorker pretty soon."

"Yes," he said, with a touch of grimness in his voice, walking into the dining-room and sitting down for a light lunch he always had before going to bed. Alice anticipated all his wants with anxious and gentle solicitude.

"Haven't you had a single visitor since I left this morning?" he asked. "Nobody at all?"

"Not a soul. I suppose everybody is getting ready for Christmas, and besides there are only two or three women that I visit, you know."

Maybe you think Johnnie ought to have stood up then and demanded firmly to know the whole truth. Maybe you despise him as a mean-spirited cur. Maybe you think that Alice's little attentions would only have maddened a real man. Well, it may be that Johnnie hasn't the bold and raging spirit of a lion. But somehow or other he could not yet think anything definitely evil about that pleasant-faced, clear-eyed, wholesome-looking woman over there across the table. He would not permit the full light of his consciousness to play on the horrid thing that skulked in the dim outskirts of his mind. With tremendous effort he held his judgment in absolute abeyance for the time. And so, acting somewhat confusedly, and thus attracting more of Alice's uneasy attentions, he went silently to bed.

"You are working too hard at that old office, John," she whispered. "Don't do it, please. It isn't worth while at all."

He answered nothing, and after a night of writhing torture rose and went mechanically through the routine at home. At the office he followed the line of least resistance, which was the line of his regular work, even accomplishing some intricate tonnage calculations. And at the end of the day he rode home again; that seemed the natural thing to do.

Alice was cooking dinner. Johnnie ate, smoked a pipe, crept to bed. She showed signs of increasing uneasiness. His mind seized that fact, holding it with others that were to be used, he felt vaguely, in a final conclusion.

The next day, at his desk, he suddenly found himself staring vacantly at a long column of figures that he had set himself to an hour before, and he was saying to himself, "What shall I do if it is true?" "If what is true?" he furiously questioned himself, and did not answer. Then, after a long time, he said, "I must make sure first."

He would stay at the office after dinner every night now, going home at different times varying from 8 to 10 o'clock. He would stand opposite the flat-house and watch those shaded windows on the third floor.

This was on Wednesday. That night and on Thurdsay and Friday nights he saw the shadow of Alice and the strange shadow in the front room. "The man must live in the same house," he concluded. Johnnie decided that those little caressing motions he saw must be Alice fondling the lapel of his coat, his tie, the very buttons on his clothes. "She can't keep her hands off him," he thought bitterly.

Yet on these nights he walked slowly across the street and went upstairs after ringing the vestibule bell, and once he heard some whispering in the third-floor hallway and then a door softly closing. Let them be lulled into carelessness first. Let them think that he was a soft-headed ninny whom it was easy to deceive. He found, on these nights, Alice sitting in the rocking-chair holding that book in her hands. Johnnie conceived a violent hatred for it, though it was only an old "Paradise Lost" he had used in his English class at school.

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He dawdled in front of delicatessen-shop windows, . . . looking long at the sausages . . . as if they were thrilling sights.—Page 742.

On Saturday afternoons he and Alice usually went out for what they had called a lark, meaning a leisurely stroll, a restaurant dinner, and a theatre. Oh, but these had been rich with joy, absolutely rich. But on this Saturday morning when Johnnie started out he mumbled, "I'll have to work this afternoon; won't be home till 6 o'clock." She said he was doing too much extra work, and yet he noticed furtively that her face cleared when he said he would not be home.

"Well, you can ease up after Christmas," she said, kissing him good-by.

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How could he ease up after Christmas? Would there not still be some two hundred dollars to save for the one thousand dollars? She knew that. But maybe now the one thousand dollars didn't mean anything. After all, she had heart enough to want to keep him from unnecessary work.

The suspicion that had skulked on the dim outskirts of Johnnie's consciousnes at first had stalked round and round in ever-decreasing circles until now, having attained horrid clearness of outline, it occupied the centre of his mind, and there was nothing else there day or night. His routine had loosened its hold on him entirely; he hadn't done any real work in the last three days. Stopping in at the savings bank, he drew out the seven hundred and ninety dollars and drifted on up the Bowery, buying a pistol in a pawnshop, a box of cartridges in a hardware store further up.

A Third Avenue elevated train took him to Harlem, where he looked up his boarding-house. This morning he did not loathe it. As he wandered aimlessly along the dingy street he heard the strident voice of his one-time landlady in her front hall; it did not make an unpleasant impression on him. If he could only be back there, and just as he was before that office-boy had said, "Old Johnnie!" Of course he was no longer a youth. Why had that epithet burned into him and set him on fire with silly old ambitions that were not for him? The wise adjust themselves to circumstances; he should have gone on as he was. After all, was that not a smooth and peaceful way?

Taking the subway to Times Square, Johnnie drifted on down Broadway. The shop-windows were full of Christmas brilliances. There was an unusual vivacity in the street crowds, due, he thought, to the increased proportion of boys and girls, freed from schools for the holidays, who were getting ready for the best of all the festival times.

Here and there Johnnie touched a window with his hand wistfully. How he loved this city! It almost ignored him, to be sure, but he had fancied of late that it had begun to be genial with him. It mattered not whether this was true, he loved it ardently. And then was this not a sort of farewell visit? There was a sad and longing good-by in his every movement.

The posters in front of the theatres halted him, and he read through the colored print, noting the quoted commendations from *The Times*, *The Sun*, *The Herald*, and all the rest, of the shows inside; wondering, too, how it could be that he noticed these things.

In a department-store window at Thirty-fourth Street he saw some furs. A two-piece set marked $49.99 attracted him. "I was going to get her something like that this Christmas," he thought. "All women like furs." Touching the pistol in his pocket with his hand, he sighed deeply and drifted on down Broadway with the crowds.

Noticing a dairy-lunch room, he went inside and ate, rejoining then the slow-moving throng. It began to snow; the whitness of the flakes annoyed Johnnie, he didn't know why. He was getting cold. He noted that he was lagging more and more in his return to Brooklyn. Yet he must go on.

Finally, at Fourteenth Street, in a burst of flaring anger, he bustled down into the Subway station determinedly and rode to the Brooklyn Bridge, boarding an elevated train there for South Brooklyn. The snow was an inch thick on the ground when he left the train, and the wind from the near-by bay was blowing up a cold that soaked into the bones unless one hurried.

But Johnnie was lagging again. He didn't want to go up his street; he hated what he seemed to divine was up there. He dawdled in front of delicatessen-shop windows, tailors' windows, and laundry-shop windows, looking long at the sausages, suits, and shirts as if they were thrilling sights.

Now he was opposite the flat. Behind the lace-curtains he could see some one moving around now and then. It was 4 o'clock, and the winter darkness was creeping over the city. With his shoulders hunched up, his face ashy pale, his heart pounding like the gloomy beats in a funeral march, Johnnie marched across the street, entered the vestibule, did not ring the downstairs bell, tipped up the stairs, stopping in front of his door.

Alice was saying a word occasionally in a low voice. Johnnie gripped his pistol, hunching his shoulders higher and closer together. He was very cold. The gas-jet in the dark hallway leaped and danced with a mocking gayety.

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Johnnie thought of going up through the scuttle, over the roof and down to the fire-escape at his kitchen window, then stealing through that way into his flat, that he might watch what he could see. This was repulsive to him; he would even knock, giving

of cloth that were to be fitted together, tumbled out on the floor.

"You told me not to work," said Alice, leaning wearily against the corner of the closet. "But I just had to, I was so lonesome, and I *am* a good dressmaker, John;

"Oh, John, don't, please; I'll tell you." "Come out," called Johnnie.

the two taps that Alice knew was his signal. Drawing a profound breath that quivered piteously, Johnnie tapped twice on the door. He even waited for it to be opened.

"Oh!" He heard Alice smother an exclamation. There was some shuffling. She opened the door, her hair dishevelled, a look of guilt on her face. No windows were opened or had been opened. Striding to the one large closet in the flat, holding his hand on the pistol in his pocket, Johnnie seized the door-knob. Alice leaped to stop him, sobbing out, "Oh, John, don't, please; I'll tell you."

"Come out," called Johnnie. He snatched open the door, and a dressmaker's dummy, covered with the sections

they all say so. You don't know how that dummy helps me, John, on these lonesome days, and I hated to see you work so hard to save what we wanted. Why, I have kissed that dummy sometimes, John, it meant so much to me—and to you, too, I thought. I hated to hide it in the flat across the hall at night, it seemed so far away from me."

She waited a moment, going on in a lower voice.

"And now I have made three hundred and fifty dollars. You see, here it is. I kept it in the salt-jar to hide it from burglars. Wasn't that silly, John? I was going to tell you Christmas. I know I'm not the fine lady you try to make me out, John; I'm just common, I reckon. Will

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you forgive me—as a Christmas gift, John?"

Johnnie had stood, with his hand on the door-knob, looking down at the dressmaker's dummy. Now he leaned over, picked up the figure, set it gently inside the closet and closed the door. Taking two falling steps, he collapsed into a chair, covering his face with his hands, and laughing the laughter that ministers to anguish too deep for tears.

And Alice always pretended to believe that Johnnie's assault on the closet was just one of his clever burlesque attacks on a secret he had known for several weeks.

LITTLE SISTER

By Richard Burton

I KNOW a girl of presence fresh and fair.
  She lies abed year-long, and so has lain
For half a lifetime; flower-sweet the air;
  The room is darkened to relieve her pain.

There is no hope held out of healing her,
  You could not blame her if she turned her face
Sullen unto the wall, and did demur
  From further breathing in her prison place.

Not so: her sick bed is a throne, wherefrom
  She doth most royally her favors grant;
Thither the needy and the wretched come,
  She is At Home to every visitant.

They call her *Little Sister*: for her heart
  Goes out to each that takes her by the hand,
In sisterly devotion; 'tis her part
  To feel, to succor, and to understand.

Unto her dim-lit chamber how they flock,
  The seamy folk, the weakling and the base!
There is no sin so low that she will mock,
  No shame that dare not look her in the face.

One never thinks of woe beside her bed,
  So blithe she bends beneath the rigorous rod;
She does not seem like one uncomforted,
  Her prayers like songs go bubbling up to God.

Hers is the inner secret of the soul;
  Radiant renouncement, love and fellow cheer,—
These things do crown her like an aureole,
  Making her saintly, while they make her dear.

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THE TURNSTILE

BY A. E. W. MASON

IX

ROBERT DAVENTRY EXPLAINS

THUS the greater part of three years passed, but toward the end of the third the influenza became virulent throughout that country. It was a winter of sharp frosts and sudden thaws. One week the lanes were deep in snow and the fields white squares ruled off by the hedges; the next the whole countryside ran water. The epidemic was at its worst in December, and during that month it attacked Joan Daventry. She was now a woman of seventy, and the activity of her life had worn out her heart. She died within the week of her seizure, and from that time Robert Daventry's strength steadily declined. It may have been that the loss of Joan loosened his hold on life, or, again, it may have been, as Dr. Hill declared, that he caught a chill at the graveside which he could not shake off. But, whatever the cause, he ailed through January, and in the beginning of the following month, while sitting on the bench at Ludsey, he was seized with a great faintness. He was driven back to the white house, and took to his bed; and on the next day the snow fell again.

Ten days after he had fallen sick, Dr. Hill came from the bedroom and found Cynthia waiting as ever for his news. He was an oldish man, and quite at home in that house. He slipped his arm through hers and said in a grave and gentle voice:

"Your father wants you, my dear. He has something to say to you."

Cynthia looked at him anxiously.

"Won't it tire him too much to talk?"

"He will not, I think, be tired for very long. You had better go to him at once, for his mind is quite clear now. I will come back to-morrow morning, unless you telephone to me. It is now, I am afraid, a matter of waiting."

He drove away from the door. Cynthia walked back along the passages to the room where the old man lay in a great four-poster bed. The afternoon was closing in, and the room was not yet lit. But there was light enough for her to appreciate all that Dr. Hill had meant. Robert Daventry had grown so frail, his hands and face were so very nearly transparent.

"I have a good deal to tell you, Cynthia," he said feebly, and his lips tried to smile. "So listen to me carefully."

The nurse went out of the room. Cynthia sat down by the bed and took the old man's hand in hers. She made no pretence that another opportunity would come.

"You will be very well off, my dear, I am thankful to say," he continued. "There's the estancia, about which I will say a word to you later, and a little more than four hundred thousand pounds in the stocks. It's practically all coming to you. Of course, the profit on the estancia varies with the season, and may in bad years mean nothing; but, on the average, I reckon you ought to have thirty thousand a year. That leaves out this house and the little farm which goes with it. They are yours already. I have made Hill one of my executors—he'll be rather a figure-head, I expect—and Isaac Benoliel, of Culver, the other. They are both friends of yours, and understanding people. I have tied up half the money on you and your children. If you haven't any children you will bequeath it as you like. But I am hoping very much that you will. I once asked a woman what she looked back upon as the happiest time of her life, and she said the evenings when she and her husband used to sit alone together before their first child was born. I think that was a wise saying, Cynthia. It struck me very much at the time, and has never since seemed to me less true than it did then. And, you know, everybody can't expect quite the same luck as Joan and I had in finding you." He pressed her hand with such strength as he had, and lay for a little while silent, husbanding his strength.

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"I was advised by my lawyer," he resumed, "to tie my whole fortune up. But I talked it over with Joan and we were afraid that it might perhaps occur to you afterward that we didn't completely trust you."

"Oh, father, I should never have thought that," Cynthia protested gently.

The old man shook his head.

"One can never be quite certain that queer, stinging ideas won't come," he said. "And we both were anxious that you should be sure always that we had no fear of the way in which you would manage your life. So you will be completely mistress of half your fortune," and he hesitated for a moment, "when you come of age. But I would like you, when you are in doubt, to consult Isaac Benoliel. I have a great faith in him."

"I, too," said Cynthia. "I will consult him."

A look of relief came into Robert Daventry's face.

"I am glad of that," he said. "There are people, of course, who are prejudiced against him. He is a Jew, and he's new, and he has that queer sort of indefinable position which attracts criticism. But I think you will find him a good friend."

Daventry's voice had weakened to a whisper, and he lay back upon his pillows with his eyes closed. Cynthia moved, but the pressure of his hand retained her. She sat and waited, speaking no word and holding back the tears which smarted in her eyes. Robert Daventry spoke again.

"There's some medicine," he said. "Hill gave it me to keep me going. It's in a glass."

Cynthia lifted a glass filled with some grayish liquid, and held it to the old man's lips. He drank, and resumed:

"I have written down during the last day or two the heads of what I wanted to say on a paper."

Cynthia found a slip of paper on the table by the bedside.

"Just read."

There were some words written one below the other on the paper in a straggling hand. Cynthia read them out.

"Money."

"I have said all I have to say, I think, about that."

"Diana Royle," Cynthia read next. But she read the name slowly, so slowly that Robert Daventry noticed her deliberation.

"I don't think you can see, Cynthia," he said. "It's getting dark."

"Oh, yes, father, I can see quite clearly," she replied. "What of Mrs. Royle?"

"You know her," said Robert. "You like her, too, I think, don't you?" Cynthia did not reply, but Daventry had not asked the question in the tone of one needing a reply. "You will want some one to live with you until you get married, which, by the way, you don't seem in a hurry to do, my dear. The young fellows round here don't seem to have made much impression. Oh! I am not bustling you, my dear. Only—only—don't leave it too long, Cynthia," he said, and his hand sought hers again.

Cynthia stirred uneasily. It was the way of men, to want to marry every girl off as soon as possible, she knew. But she wished to give no promise.

"You will probably go to London. I don't want you to mope down here all the time. There's no reason that you should. You can have your house in town. But you will want some one with you, and I thought my cousin, Diana Royle, would be the most suitable person."

Cynthia raised her head as if she was about to speak. But she did not, and Daventry said:

"I wrote to her about it."

"Oh," said Cynthia slowly. "You have already written?"

"Yes, and she consented at once. You see her husband left her not well-off. So it will be an advantage to her. And though she is older than you are, she is not so much older that you won't be in sympathy with one another."

Cynthia nodded her head.

"I see," she said. "Yes, of course, I know her very well." But a note of reserve was audible, or rather would have been audible to an on-looker in that room. But Robert Daventry was altogether occupied in the effort to master his overmastering weakness. There was more which he wished to say; there was something which he must say.

"Then that's settled," he whispered; and with his eyes he asked for his cordial. Cynthia once more supported him, and held the glass to his lips.

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"Now, what comes next?" he asked, and Cynthia looked at the paper.

"The estancia," she said.

"Yes," said Daventry, and a smile suddenly illumined his face and made it young. "The estancia! You have the right to dispose of it, Cynthia. For one never knows what changes may come. But I don't want you to let it go unless there is some great necessity. It brings in, generally, a good income, and now that Walton looks after it, it gives very little trouble. Walton is a good man. I should give him an interest in it, if I were you, and as time goes on increase his interest. Keep him and keep it. I want you very much to do that. I am proud of the Daventry estancia, for one thing. For another, the best part of Joan's life and of mine was spent there. There, too, we first brought you when you came to us. There's yet another reason," and he stopped, and thought. "Yes, there's yet another reason why I care for it so much—but—" and he shook his head and gave up the effort to interpret it: "it's not very clear in my mind just now. I only know it's there—a strong reason."

He was speaking with a depth of tenderness in his voice for which Cynthia was hardly prepared. Always he had seemed to her to look upon the estancia as a business proposition rather than as the soil in which his heart was rooted. Always, too, he had seemed so contented to live in England, and he had taken his part with so much zest in the local administration of the county. She was as puzzled now by this note of yearning—for it was no less than yearning—as by the reason which he could not interpret. It was all made plain to her in after years, but by another than Robert Daventry.

"I want you very much to keep the estancia, Cynthia."

"Of course I will keep it," she said, and again she made no pretence that the day was distant when it would be hers to keep. Her heart was heavy with grief, it went out in love to this dear friend of hers; she was young and the cry was loud in her bosom, "What will I do without you?" but her lips did not utter it. He would be quite sure of her love without her protests. There was comprehension enough, and to spare, between them to make her certain of that. And, since he wanted her to listen, she put aside her distress and the thought of the loneliness which awaited her and obeyed him.

"I would even be glad"—and the old man hesitated with the timidity of one asking a heavy favor.—"Yes, I would be glad if you would go back there—oh, not often—but just once or twice to see that all was going on well."

Cynthia's hand trembled for a moment. She looked at him with a sudden terror in her eyes. But he was lying now upon his side with his face to the window, and seeing things not to be seen through its panes. It cost Cynthia a great deal to make the promise he sought from her. She shrank from a return to the estancia with every fibre of her body. But she made it. He besought her in so wistful a voice.

"Yes, I will go back, father."

"Thank you," he said gently.

Outside the window the snow lay white and deep upon the slate roofs of the outbuildings, and was piled upon the black branches of the trees. Overhead was a gray sky of winter. But for the glimmer of the snow it would almost have been dark. A smile shone again on the old man's face.

"Perhaps Walton's cutting the corn today! Think of it!" he said, with a great longing, and before Cynthia's eyes there rose immediately the vision of a great glistening field of standing wheat and a reaping-machine like a black toy outlined against it. They remained thus in silence for a little while. Cynthia was thinking.

"After all, he may not be in the Argentine . . . I may not meet him. . . . He will have no power over me. . . . There is no reason why I should be afraid."

And then, as though in answer to these arguments, Robert Daventry said:

"You can go back now, Cynthia, without fear."

The girl looked at him with startled eyes. Had she spoken aloud, she asked herself? Had she betrayed her secret just at this last moment? But her eyes fell upon the slip of paper in her hand, and there she saw written plainly under the word "estancia" the name "James Challoner."

Robert Daventry looked toward a bureau which stood by the window.

"The little drawer on the left. No, the one above that. There's a cutting from a newspaper."

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Cynthia found in the drawer half a column of a Spanish newspaper. The name was on the top of the column. It was a paper published in Buenos Ayres. She brought the cutting back to the bed and placed it between his fingers.

"Yes, that's it," he said, and he lay back upon his pillows, and gathered his strength. "I have got to tell you now something which we have always kept a secret from you."

"There is no need to tell it," said Cynthia.

Robert Daventry stared at her.

"If you do know it," he said slowly, "we have made the cruellest mistake we could possibly have made. But you can't know it!"

"It's about James Challoner?" asked Cynthia, and Robert Daventry shut his eyes with a look of great distress upon his face.

"How long have you known?" he asked.

"From the night when he came to the estancia," she answered. And she told how she had slipped into the smoking-room and how, huddled in the great chair, she had heard all that James Challoner proposed for her. The shadow deepened upon Daventry's face as he listened, and when she had ended he asked with deep regret:

"Why didn't you tell us this, Cynthia?"

"Because, just outside the smoking-room door in the hall, you both decided not to tell me—not to breathe a word of—of my father's visit. You thought the knowledge would trouble and frighten me. You thought it would hurt. Well, I was as certain that you would be greatly distressed to know that already I had the knowledge. So I held my tongue."

"And it did trouble you?"

"Yes."

"A great deal?"

"Yes," Cynthia admitted. "I was frightened. I did not know what power he might have. I knew you had fled from him for my sake."

"And since you have been here—during these three years—you have still been troubled, still frightened lest he should come and claim you with the law at his side?"

Though the old man could hardly speak above a whisper, he was strangely insistent in his questioning. The words came unevenly, with breaks between, and now and then a weak gasp for breath. Cynthia replied quite simply:

"Yes, here, too, I have thought that he might come. I used to be frightened at night. I used to hear him in the house."

And with every word she spoke, the compunction and distress deepened in Daventry's mind.

"What a pity!" he said. "Neither of us guessed, not even Joan, who was quicker than I to notice things. And we thought we knew all about you, Cynthia!" A faint smile lit up his face. "How little, after all, we did know! For we could have spared you all this trouble. Read." And opening his hand he let her take from it the newspaper slip. She uttered a cry as she read the first lines.

"It's true," said Daventry, from the bed.

Cynthia carried the cutting over to the window and read by the fading light. It gave the account of an inquest held at a small town twenty-five miles up the line from the Daventry estancia on the body of an Englishman who had been stabbed to the heart by a Gaucho in a drunken quarrel at a tavern. There was a witness who had worked with the Englishman, and could identify him. He called himself James Challoner, and, when he was drunk, he would boast of his family. Cynthia let the slip of paper fall from her fingers, and stood by the window until Robert Daventry called her to his side.

"You held your tongue so as not to distress us," he whispered. "We held ours so as not to frighten you. And so because we were careful of your happiness, and you of ours, you have gone through years of anxiety and terror. Needless anxiety! Terror without a cause! I am so sorry. It seems so pitiful. It seems rather grim to me, Cynthia."

Cynthia answered quietly:

"That's the way things happen." And when she had spoken, Robert Daventry, with an effort, raised himself upon his elbow and peered into her face.

"You oughtn't to be able to say that, Cynthia," he said remorsefully. "You oughtn't to be able to think it. It's not the proper philosophy for twenty. I am afraid, my dear, that trouble has gone deep." He fell back and in a moment a little whimsical smile flickered upon his face. "I don't think I'll tell Joan about this," he said. "She wouldn't like it. She wouldn't forgive herself for not having noticed that you were troubled."

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"After all, it was my fault," said Cynthia. "For I hid in the room. However, it's all over now."

But Daventry was not prepared to accept her word. Some flash of insight forbade him.

"It has left its mark, my dear," he insisted, and in broken sentences he dwelt upon his theme. His mind began to wander after a little, but through his wanderings there ran the thread of this idea:

"Joan was always so careful. . . . Even when you were quite a little girl . . . we were never to laugh at you. . . . 'Children and dogs' she used to say, 'you must never laugh at them. Little things warp children.' . . . Do you remember when you used to write plays and perform them to us at Christmas, in a toy theatre, with little figures in tin slides? . . . Joan was always careful that we should take them seriously, and not laugh at the wrong place. I never did want to laugh at the wrong place. I thought you wrote very good plays, Cynthia. I used to say you were a genius. But Joan wouldn't have it. 'No!' she said, 'All children are born dramatists, but they forget the trick of it afterward.' . . . I suppose she knew. She was a very clever woman—" and so he drifted off gradually into sleep. Cynthia stayed by his side while the twilight faded and the darkness came; and the light of the fire danced ever more brightly upon the ceiling of the room. The wind set from the west and as the hours passed, the chimes from the great clock in Ludsey Church tower came softly and faintly into the room. But they did not disturb the old man's rest. He went floating out on a calm tide of sleep to his death, and Cynthia sat by his side wondering in the intervals of her grief at the strange arrangement of life which ordained that the efforts of people to secure the happiness of others should only cause needless terrors and vain miseries.

X

MR. BENOLIEL

"THERE are no ladies," Captain Rames said indignantly, as he took his seat in Mr. Benoliel's dining-room.

His neighbor, a florid and handsome man, a little past the prime of life, glanced at the name on the visiting-card which marked Captain Rames's place, and smiled sympathetically.

"I can quite understand," he returned with a pleasant pomposity, "that to a sailor who has been three years in the Antarctic the deficiency is a very lamentable business. But there are some elements of consolation. Amongst the twelve men seated at this round table of mahogany, you will hardly see one who has not made some stir in the world. Upon your right, for instance, you will see Mr. Winthrop, that long and sallow person. He is a political resident in one of the native States of Rajputana, and his work, in six volumes, on the Indian bangle, is, I believe, supposed to be the last word upon the subject. A little nearer to you you will see a youth, though he is not so young as he looks. He is M. Poileaux, and the only aviator who has not yet fallen into the sea. When he does, he will come here no more. I myself am a surgeon whose name, I believe, is not unknown."

And with a large white hand the famous Sir James Burrell discreetly pointed out others of note to his companion.

Captain Rames glanced indifferently round the table. A few of the twelve were in black coats, and amongst those few was Mr. Benoliel. It was the night of a court ball, and most of the guests were in some uniform or another, or shone in the gold of the privy councillor.

"They are, no doubt, men of vast importance," replied Captain Rames bluntly. "But leaving you out of account, Sir James, I could dispense with the lot of them. When I dine in Grosvenor Square, in June, I do ask that there should be a petticoat on one side of me, at all events."

The surgeon laughed good-humoredly. He studied his neighbor with a quick, observant eye. Captain Rames was of the middle height, with a squareness of build, which his gold epaulets exaggerated at this moment, and he was square too of face. His hair was thick and curved over from the side, parting in a dark, turbulent comb, his forehead was broad, his eyes keen and very steady. Vigor rather than refinement was the mark of him; he had more character than intellect, more capacity than knowledge; thus Sir James Burrell defined him.

"I have played the comforter," he said, "at so many bedsides that I should feel my

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vanity touched if I failed to console you," he returned. "Let me bring to your attention the menu. I am confident that it will appeal to you."

"Yes, that's all right," Rames admitted, as he leaned forward and glanced at the card. "But why should it particularly appeal to me?"

Sir James Burrell shrugged his shoulders.

"My profession brings me into touch with interesting people. I take my pleasure in observing them. And I have always noticed that the men who cheerfully endure the greatest hardships are also the first to demand the best of the luxuries, when they are within reach."

"Well, it's true," said Captain Rames. "I can make a shift with pemmican, but I honestly like a good dinner. It's the contrast, I suppose."

Sir James shook his head.

"It goes deeper than that," said he. "Your pale saints are no doubt profitable to the painters of glass windows, but I doubt if the world owes so very much to them. The great things are really done by the people who have a good deal of the animal in them; and animals like good dinners."

Captain Rames was mollified, and his face took on a jovial look.

"I am animal enough," he said, "to purr when my back is scratched."

But Sir James Burrell was mounted on a hobby and hardly heeded the interruption.

"I could quote historical instances, but I need go no further than this room. Do you see the man sitting next to our host, and upon his right?"

Captain Rames saw a small thin man in the dress of a privy councillor, a man with a peaked, fleshless face, in which a pair of small eyes twinkled alertly. A scanty crop of gray hair covered the back of his skull, and left markedly visible the height and the narrowness of his forehead. Captain Rames leaned forward with a new interest.

"Yes, and I recognize his face," he said. "Surely that is Henry Smale."

"Exactly," returned Sir James. "He is in the cabinet, and, quite apart from politics, he is, upon scientific grounds, a man of great distinction."

"But, surely, he disproves your theory. He looks an ascetic."

"And is nothing of the kind," interrupted Sir James. "I admit that his look of asceticism has been a great asset to him in his career. But the public has quite misjudged him. He is a voluptuary, with the face of a monk—the most useful combination for public life in this country which you could possibly imagine. If he dines alone at his club, he will not dine under a guinea; and he has the animal weaknesses up to the brim of him. For instance, he is as jealous as a dog. Filch from him the smallest of his prerogatives and, like the good democrat he is, he will turn upon you bitterly. Yet he has done great things, and initiated bold policies. Why? Because he has enough of the animal in him to do great things." And upon that Sir James broke off.

The butler was standing at the elbow of Captain Rames, with a jug of champagne in one hand, and a decanter of red wine in the other. He bent down and offered Captain Rames his choice. Sir James Burrell intervened.

"By the way," he said, "have you any wish to stand particularly well with your host?"

"I am now beginning to think that I have," replied Captain Rames.

"Then I should choose his Burgundy. He has his fancies, like the rest of us, and to prefer his Nuits-St.-George to champagne is one way to his esteem."

Captain Rames took the hint, and, as he raised his glass to his lips, Mr. Benoliel smiled to him across the table.

"I will ask your opinion upon that wine, Captain Rames," he said, and so turned again to Henry Smale.

"You see, he noticed at once," said Sir James.

Captain Rames had noticed something too. At the mention of his name, Henry Smale had looked up with interest. He was even now obviously asking a question of Mr. Benoliel about him. Rames began to take more careful stock of his host. Mr. Benoliel was a tall, high-shouldered man, with a dark thin face in which delicacy seemed to predominate over strength. His hair was black, and a little black mustache drew a pencil line along his upper lip. His fingers were long and extraordinarily restless. It was difficult to make a guess at his age. A first glance would put him in the forties. But when Mr. Benoliel showed his eyes—which was not always,

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for he had a trick of looking out between lids half-closed—it seemed that he must have lived for centuries; so much of fatigue and so much of patience were suddenly revealed.

"I wonder why he asked me to dine here," said Harry Rames.

"You were certain to dine here," replied Sir James.

"I met him but the once by the purest accident."

"You were certain to meet him," said Sir James. "All famous people meet him. All famous people dine here once. But he is not really a snob. For, quite a number of them are never invited twice."

"He can be a good friend?"

"Of that I cannot speak," said Sir James.

The courses followed one after the other, and Harry Rames found his eyes continually wandering back across the silver and bright flowers to the exotic figure of his host. He took his share in the conversation about him, but a movement of Mr. Benoliel would check him in his speech or cause him to listen with an absent ear. He watched the play of his delicate fingers upon the table-cloth, the continual restlessness of his body. Mr. Benoliel was of his race; there was in his aspect a queer mixture of the financier and the dilettante, the shrewd business man and the sensuous appreciator of art. There was a touch, too, of the feminine in him.

"I told you that you would not be bored," said Sir James Burrell toward the end of the dinner. "You are not the first man who has fallen under the spell of Mr. Benoliel."

Harry Rames laughed.

"I am under no spell, I assure you," he said frankly. "I was wondering whether he was likely to be of use to me."

"It is very likely," returned Sir James. "He has been of use to many. He plays at omniscience. To anticipate a wish before it is expressed, to serve an ambition before it has been revealed—that is one of our host's little vanities. He may have asked you here with no other object than to gratify it."

Harry Rames glanced quickly at his companion.

"Is that so?" he asked eagerly. Then his face fell. "But I am not even a friend of his."

"I do not think that matters," said the surgeon. "He likes to pose as Providence, and the posture will be more dramatic if it is assumed toward an acquaintance rather than a friend."

"He is a sham, then," said Rames bluntly.

"By no means," Sir James replied suavely. "Let us say, rather, that he is an artist."

Captain Rames turned with a furrowed brow to his companion.

"I am no great hand at subtleties," he said. "Will you tell me what you know of Mr. Benoliel? I am a beginner in the world, and he may be of importance to me."

Sir James Burrell smiled. He was in his element. To supply a character much as some author of the seventeenth century might have done, was a foible which continually tempted him. He was not always successful. Paradox allured him into difficulties, cheap epigrams at times blazed before him, and would not be quiet until he had uttered them. But often he managed to hit off, with some happiness, at all events, the externals of the person whom he described. He drank his wine now slowly and set down his glass. Then, twisting the delicate stem with the finger-tips of his large and handsome hand, he began:

"He is a Jew; of course, and an Oriental. But from what quarter of the Orient, who shall say? You may give him any birthplace, from the Levant to Casa Blanca, and no one will contradict you. Some hold him to be a charlatan, as you are inclined to do. But he is an accepted personage, not blown into notice and out of it by the favor of a season, but a permanency. How he became so, I cannot tell you. He is very busy all day, although when the darkness comes it would be difficult to point to any one thing which he had done. He is always at the top table at public dinners, and very near to the chairman. But he never proposes a toast or responds to one. If he writes a letter to the *Times*, it appears in leaded type. If you want secret information on any subject, he can get it for you. If you want help, he will find the man who can give it. He is a power in the city. He is a power in politics, and the motor-cars of prime-ministers stand at his door at ten o'clock in the morning. Yet he was never in the House, and has never made a

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speech on any platform. It is believed by many that he might achieve greatness if he chose. But he never chooses. He has the air at a discussion of being able to say the last word on any subject, but he does not say it. He seems, indeed, to stand high in the world on a pedestal which has no legs to it. That is how I describe him. For the rest, he is rich, and I have never heard him utter an opinion which was not derived from others, or altogether banal. But, listen! He is going to speak to us."

"However, I can recommend the old brandy," was all that Mr. Benoliel had at that moment to say.

"There, what did I tell you!" said Sir James, triumphant at the success of his diagnosis.

"Well, if his talk is banal his brandy isn't, God bless him," said Captain Rames. "But I interrupted you."

"He has been guilty of one weakness," Sir James resumed. "He married into an old family of great poverty and the marriage lasted for six months. His wife lives handsomely in Eton Square— But I see that I am going to lose you, for our host is beckoning to you."

Captain Rames obeyed the summons with alacrity and walked round the table.

"I see that you are going on to Buckingham Palace," said Mr. Benoliel. "So I thought that I would interrupt your conversation with Sir James Burrell. For I want to introduce you to Mr. Smale."

Mr. Smale held out his hand. At a sign from Benoliel, the butler brought up a chair and placed it between Smale and his host.

"Sit down," said Benoliel, and Captain Rames obeyed.

"Benoliel tells me," said Smale, "that you are thinking of Parliament."

Captain Rames was startled. He could not remember that in his one brief conversation with his host he had even mentioned his ambition.

"I inferred it from a casual word or two you let drop," said Benoliel with a smile.

"Well, it's true," said Rames. "I should like to stand on your side very much, Mr. Smale, if I could find a seat to contest."

Henry Smale nodded.

"That, no doubt, could be arranged. You would be a strong candidate. You bring a reputation and some breath of romance to favor you. But—" and he pursed up his lips as if in doubt and looked at Captain Rames with a searching eye. Rames was disconcerted. He had been back in England for some six months, and during those six months he had been much sought after. At this period of his life, doubts of him had been rarely expressed behind his back, and never to his face. Young ladies whom he did not know had clamored for his autograph, young ladies whom he did know had approached him with a winning humility; established beauty had smiled at him; established fame had welcomed him as an equal. The calm scrutiny of Henry Smale was a displeasing splash of cold water.

"Of course," he said, with a diffidence, which he did not feel. "I might be a failure."

And Henry Smale replied promptly:

"That's just it. You might be a failure. Meanwhile you are a great success, and have the chance of standing quite alone in your career. For what you set out to do is not yet done. You leave the laurel for another to snatch."

"That is quite true Mr. Smale," Harry Rames replied. "But I have considered it. I am not yielding to an impulse. I have counted the risk!"

He spoke with a nice adjustment of firmness and modesty. Henry Smale rose from his chair.

"Very well," he said. "Will you come down to the House at four o'clock tomorrow afternoon? I will introduce you to Hanley, the chief whip."

Captain Rames flushed with pleasure.

"Thank you, I shall be delighted," he cried, rising in his turn; and as the two men shook hands, Mr. Benoliel said gently:

"I was thinking of Ludsey. It has no candidate on your side, Smale."

XI

A MAN ON THE MAKE

A WEEK later, and much about the same hour, Captain Rames was driven along the Mall in St. James's Park. Friday had come round again, and the light did not burn in the clock-tower at Westminster. But the windows of the admiralty blazed upon the horse-guards' parade, and its great doors

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stood open for a glittering company. It was the night of official dinners and receptions in honor of the king's birthday. Soldiers in scarlet, sailors in blue, ministers and privy councillors in gold, and ladies in their shimmering gowns thronged with the smaller fry in black coats up the shallow steps into a hall decorated with Union Jacks. There was a thrill of expectancy in the air that evening. Rumors were rife that the government was inclined to advise a dissolution. Members' wives were speculating whether they must go back to the constituencies and tread the ways of deference; their husbands how soon the time would come when they must exchange the erect dignity of the member for the supple curves of the candidate; and curious eyes dwelt, as if in hope of answer upon a sturdy white-haired man with a blunt, good-humored face, who, wearing a uniform with epaulets of red worsted, left you in doubt whether he was a fireman or an admiral, He was, however, the prime minister, and he stood in the hall amongst his friends, bearing the world lightly according to his wont. He stepped forward and shook hands with Rames as he passed, and so turned again to his friends. He was heard to say, "I have to-day achieved the ambition of my life"; and curious ears eager to glean a hint were inclined toward him.

"To-day?" one of the group exclaimed. "You have been prime-minister for three years."

The Prime-Minister laughed.

"That's nothing," he said. "To become Prime-Minister was merely to take a step on the way. But to-night I wear for the first time the uniform of an Elder Brother of the Trinity, and that means that I need never wear knee-breeches again as long as I live."

The curious ears were disappointed; Harry Rames shook hands with the First Lord of the Admiralty, passed on, and in the second room was touched on the elbow by Israel Benoliel.

"I have been asked by a young friend of mine to bring you to her, and I beg you to come at once, for she is in her most imperious mood," said Mr. Benoliel in a voice of whimsical entreaty.

"We will go to her as fast as we can," said Captain Rames.

He had now been three months in England, and the shy warmth of many welcomes had made him thoroughly aware that he was a momentous personage to young ladies. He was human enough to enjoy his importance, and he followed Mr. Benoliel with alacrity toward a side of the room where Cynthia Daventry sat talking to a young man in the office of the Board of Trade. Rames noticed the clear and delicate profile of her face and the distinction which set her apart; he noticed too that, although she did not once look his way, the young gentleman in the Civil Service uniform was summarily dismissed.

"Cynthia, this is Captain Rames," said Israel Benoliel, and however imperious a mood Cynthia might have shown to him, she had reserved none of it for Captain Rames. Her eyes swept over him swiftly with the shy and eager look to which he had grown accustomed: she gave him her hand.

"I am very glad to meet you," she said impulsively, "because—" and she halted suddenly upon the word, with the color like a rose in her cheeks, "I suppose that you are tired of congratulations."

Captain Rames expanded: he laughed genially, a fastidious critic might have said too noisily.

"By no means," he exclaimed. "Indeed, Miss Daventry, you may lay it on with a trowel."

"I am not prepared to do that," answered Cynthia, and though she spoke lightly, her voice was guarded, and even in the eager eyes there was a constant watchfulness.

Eight months had passed since Cynthia had sat by the bedside of Robert Daventry and listened to his instructions. She had taken Diana Royle to live with her as he had bidden, though she had taken her reluctantly. She had spent nearly all that time at the white house upon the London road, in spite of Mrs. Royle's repeated suggestion that Beaulieu, or preferably Cap D'Ail in the south of France would be more satisfactory places for wintering. Diana Royle was glad to be relieved from her genteel penury in Sussex Gardens, Kensington, but she had no liking for the country. Cynthia, however, was deaf to her hints. She lived for a while in solitude, broken only by the companionship of the few neighbors with whom she was most intimate. The swift deaths of the two old people who had so long lived for her and in her, left her desolate and inclined ever

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regretfully to search back across her life for occasions in which she had failed of kindness toward them, or hurt them by forgetfulness. She was young, however, and with no taint of morbidness. The sense of desolation passed, and Diana Royle began to urge a new plan.

"You ought to take a house in town for the season, Cynthia. I know of one in an excellent position, which would just suit you. It's in Curzon Street, and the right end of the street, one of those nice, flat-fronted houses, old outside and tiled bathrooms inside. I happened, I think, to see an advertisement of it to-day."

Mrs. Royle handed the newspaper to Cynthia, who looked it over.

"We might think of it," she said.

"I am sure neither Mr. nor Mrs. Daventry would have wished you to bury yourself always in the country."

"That's true," said Cynthia. "My father looked forward to my taking a house in town."

"I don't think you could do better than this, dear," said Diana Royle. "I know the house quite well by sight."

"Well, we'll think of it," said Cynthia.

Mrs. Royle suppressed a shrug of irritation.

"You will find the house will be snapped up, dear, if you take too long thinking of it," she said with asperity.

Cynthia looked at her with innocent eyes.

"But I expect there will be other houses in London, won't there?" she asked.

She had no wish to be churlish, she understood how deeply her companion longed for the paved roadways, and the streets. And in her own heart too she was beginning to turn to the unknown world of London with an expectancy of adventure, which drew her and thrilled her, even while she hesitated.

"I don't understand you, Cynthia," Diana Royle cried in exasperation. "Are you afraid?"

The question was intended merely as a gibe, but Cynthia turned to her with startled eyes, and Mrs. Royle knew that she had chanced upon a truth.

"Of what are you afraid?" she asked curiously, and Cynthia answered while she looked into the fire:

"I once lay all night staring into a great bright mirror which revealed to me a shut door. I was in terror lest the door should open. I dreaded what might come through. I seem still to be looking into the great mirror, and with the same kind of fear. Only now the door opens upon the world, and not on the passage of a house."

Diana Royle gathered up her embroidery and her book.

"If you are going to talk that sort of nonsense, Cynthia, I shall go to bed," she remarked sternly, and left Cynthia still gazing into the fire.

Cynthia had not been speaking with affectation. The terror with which her father had for so long inspired her had left its mark deep, as Robert Daventry upon his death-bed had understood. He was dead—yes, but she could not rid her thoughts of the dreadful destiny which he had proposed for her. By so little she had escaped it. She would look round the room with its books and its dainty appointments, and feel the arms of her chair to make sure that all was real.

"If he had carried me away!" she would cry. "If he had come back with the law at his side and had carried me away!" And the streets of Buenos Aires would pass before her eyes in a procession of blazing thoroughfares and dimly lighted lanes. And because she had escaped by so little, she looked out upon all unknown things with apprehension. Moreover, Daventry's disclosure to her upon his death-bed had, in a strange way, added to her apprehension. There were three people—thus her thoughts ran; two of them seeking to hide from her knowledge which they thought would cause her pain; and she the third, seeking to hide from them, just for the same reason, that the knowledge was hers already. The years of terror had been needless, yet they had been endured, and it was love itself which had inflicted them. Kindness then could do just the same harm as the deliberate will to hurt. She took that thought into her heart of hearts, and because of it dreaded what might come through when the door opened upon the world.

With the coming of the spring, however, there came a stir in her blood. It was a spring of sunlit days and warm, soft nights. The great garden bursting into leaf and blossom, the annual miracle of tender green, the return of the birds, and the

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renewal of melody quickened the girl's pulses, gave to her a lightness of spirit, and made her dreamily expectant of wonders. She walked of an evening under her great cedar trees, with the flowers and the paths glimmering pale in the warm dusk, and the earth whispered to her of things as yet beyond her knowledge; throbbing moments of life, dreams minted in events. She woke eagerly to the clear, early mornings and the blackbirds calling on the lawn; she lingered on that lawn when the windows in the house were alight and the nightingales sang in the copses, and from some distant wood the clear, double note of a cuckoo was borne to her across the darkness. There came an evening in the middle of May when she burst her sheath like any bud on the bole of one of her chestnut trees. She stood, a creature of emotion. The soft wind brought to her ears the chimes of the clock in the great church tower at Ludsey. Desire for the adventure overswept her fears. Her feet danced, and her youth had its way with her.

She could see through the long open window Diana Royle in the drawing-room. She ran across the grass.

"Di!"

Some new sound in her voice, a leap, a thrill, made Diana look up. She saw a look in the girl's face, a light in her eyes, a soft color in her cheeks which quite transfigured her.

"I have been rather a brute, Di," cried Cynthia. "We will go to London."

"When?"

"As soon as we can pack."

A telegram was sent off to Mr. Benoliel, who was now in Grosvenor Square. He was bidden to work his quickest and his best. The furnished house in Curzon Street was still unlet. It was secured, and by the beginning of June Cynthia had come to town. There she was of course unknown. But she had made many friends in Warwickshire. Mr. Benoliel set his shoulder to the wheel: and she had a handsome balance at the bank. Add to these advantages her looks, and it will be seen that it was fairly smooth sailing for Cynthia during her first season. She danced, she dined, she lunched at Hurlingham, she went to plays and to the opera, she rode under the trees of the Row in the morning, she went up in a balloon; she came with both hands outstretched for new experiences. Yet she grasped them with a certain wariness. Eager she was, but her eagerness was guarded. For dim in the shadows at the back of her mind there was still the image of the mirror and the door. She had been in London less than a month when Harry Rames was brought to her side by Mr. Benoliel.

They talked for a moment upon immaterial topics, and then Mr. Benoliel turned to Harry Rames:

"So it is all settled, I hear."

"Practically," replied Rames. "I have still to be formally adopted as prospective candidate by the Three Hundred, but that will be done at a meeting on Monday night."

"Then there is no longer any reason why we should keep the matter secret, especially from Miss Daventry, who lives not five miles from your constituency. Cynthia," and both men turned toward her, "Captain Rames is going to stand for Ludsey at the next election."

Captain Rames smiled modestly, expecting congratulations. He liked congratulations, especially from pretty girls, but he was disappointed. He saw only a wrinkle of perplexity upon Cynthia's forehead and a shadow in her eyes.

"Why?" she asked.

"You disapprove?" said Rames.

Cynthia drew back.

"I have no right to disapprove," she said coldly, and Harry Rames planted himself sturdily on both his feet in front of her.

"Nevertheless you do," he insisted.

In spite of herself, a faint smile of amusement played about Cynthia's lips as she watched him. She felt constrained to accept his challenge.

"I should have thought—" she said with a trifle of hesitation; "it's not my business, of course—you may think it an impertinence—but since you challenge me, I should have thought that you would have done better to have gone back to the Antarctic again."

"That's just what Smale said," remarked Mr. Benoliel, and he moved away.

"That's just what Smale said, what every one will say. But it's all wrong," Rames exclaimed emphatically. I was very glad to go South. I am very glad now that I went; but once is enough."

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A little wrinkle of disdain showed about Cynthia's mouth.

"No doubt there were many hardships."

Captain Rames was nettled.

"Yes, there were, Miss Daventry, a great many, and singularly unpleasant ones. I have been twenty-four hours in a sleeping-bag with two other men. The sleeping-bag was sewn up on the inside, it was within a tent, we were so close together that we could only turn round one at a time, and we smoked in the bag, and still we were deadly cold. And I hate being cold. Yes there were hardships, and though it's easy enough to remember them lightly here in the Admiralty, they were not delightful when they happened. But I should face them once more if I wanted to go back. Only I don't. I never want to see an ice-pack again as long as I live."

The bluff confidence with which he spoke convinced Cynthia that it was not a fear of the hardships which had affected him. There she had been wrong, and she made amends.

"I have no doubt the hardships wouldn't deter you if you wanted to go," she admitted. "But what I don't understand is why you don't want to." And a greater emphasis crept into her voice than she had meant to use, and gave to her words the wistfulness of an appeal. "I should have thought," she cried, "that you could never have rested until you had finished what you had begun."

"That's true to the letter," he replied. "That's why I am standing for Ludsey."

Cynthia looked up at him in surprise.

"I don't think that I understand," she said quietly, and she made room upon the couch at her side. Harry Rames took the place. The appeal in her voice was a flattery which he quite failed to understand. Though Cynthia was young, and though she walked no longer in her enchanted garden, something of that spirit of romance, which had guided her there, had revived in her of late. Captain Rames was one of the chosen men on whom the turnstile had revolved; now that she met him in the flesh she could not forget it. He was of her dreams, he had marched in the procession of heroes, and though disillusionment had come to her he still wore a look of the heroic in her thoughts. All the more because disillusionment had come to her she wished him to retain the look. Her appeal was a prayer that he should stamp it upon his image for good and all.

"May I explain it all to you?" he asked. He sat down beside her, and in answer to that gentle appeal of hers to make the best of himself, he drew for her clearly and succinctly and proudly the picture of a man on the make. "I went South, first and last, to get on in the world," he began. "As I say, I was very glad to go. The journey was a great experience. Yes, three years of my life were very well spent upon it; but they were very well spent, not because the journey was a great experience, but because it is now the great help to me in getting on, which I always thought it was going to be."

He took no notice of the disappointment gathering upon Cynthia's face. He was not aware of it. Here was a girl of a remarkable loveliness, wistfully appealing to him to explain the inner workings of his mind, and he was delighted to gratify her wish.

"I can hardly remember the time when I was not diligently looking for my chances to get on. I was poor, you see. I am so still, indeed. I had none of those opportunities which money commands. I had somehow to create or find them. There's a motto in gold letters above the clock in the great hall at Osborne, the first of all mottoes in its superb confidence:

"There is nothing the navy cannot do."

Cynthia turned to him with eagerness.

"Yes," she said with a smile. "For a boy to have that plain and simple statement before his eyes each day, that's splendid. I suppose a boy would never speak of it, but it would be to him a perpetual inspiration."

"Yes," said Rames, "if all he thought of was the navy; if his ambitions were bound up with the navy. But mine weren't, you see, and I used to worry over that sentence even then. 'There is nothing the navy cannot do.' Very well. But that didn't mean that this little particular, insignificant cog-wheel in the navy machine was going to do anything special, or indeed anything at all. And I wanted to do things—I myself, not the navy."

"To do things?" Cynthia asked quietly, and her lips drooped a little at the corners, "Or to become a personage?"

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Captain Rames laughed good-humoredly.

"I can meet you there, Miss Daventry. There's no contradiction in the phrases. To become a personage is to secure the opportunity of doing things, and when you are a personage you soon find things which want doing. After all, how many of the great statesmen started out to be big men first. They had ideas, I grant you, but they had to make themselves big men by hook or by crook before they could carry them out. Look at Disraeli. I have been reading up these fellows. He did a lot of things. He got the Suez Canal shares. He is the author and begetter of the Imperial Idea. That's what you remember and admire him for. Yes; but don't forget his velvet trousers, and his habit of reciting his epic poems in the drawing-room after dinner. He set out first of all to be a personage. So do I in my small way. He chose velvet trousers and epic poems. I went down toward the South Pole. We each chose the path of least resistance."

Cynthia was silenced, but not convinced. There must be hundreds of instances to confute him, only for the moment she could not remember any of them. And one quality in Captain Rames impressed her.

"You speak as if you had thought all these things out," she said.

"I have had to," he replied.

"I wonder that you went into the navy at all."

"My father put me there," he answered.

Cynthia looked him over again, noting the strong, square face, the direct, the practical common-sense uninspired look of him. He would get on without a doubt. There was a great deal of force to push him on, and no great delicacy of character to hold him back. Scruples would not trouble him, and he would not fail of friends. He was of the type which makes friends easily. Even she herself was attracted. He would get on probably by trampling upon others, but he would do it good-humoredly, and with no desire to cause unnecessary pain. There are men, after all, who put nails in their boots to do the trampling.

"I wonder, with your views," she said, upon an impulse, "that you didn't leave the navy long ago and go into the city."

Harry Rames looked at her quickly.

"It's rather curious that you should have said that. For, a few years ago, I was actually thinking of the city, and wondering whether I could make a fortune there."

Cynthia laughed suddenly. Her suggestion had been uttered in sarcasm. Youth is disinclined to rate the making of money high in its standard of careers. Captain Rames would never have passed the turnstile had she spoken with him when the turnstile was.

"What held me back," he continued, quite unconscious that he was toppling off a hero's perch—and indeed he would have been totally indifferent had he known—"what held me back was the knowledge that I should be beginning too old. One has so very little time," he exclaimed with a touch of passion in his voice. "I would like to go on living and living and living for a century. As it is, one begins at twenty at the earliest, and then with luck one may have fifty-five years—that's all," and the prospect of the disintegration of his powers at the early age of seventy-five affected him with so much melancholy that Cynthia laughed again, but this time with a clear and joyous ring of amusement.

"Never mind, Captain Rames, I am sure you will live every day of your fifty-five years, and that is more than all can say."

"They are only thirty-five now," he grumbled. "However,"—he was not to be diverted from the pleasant business of unfolding his character,—"I might still have gone into the city, when one morning in June, as I was walking round the corner of Buckingham Palace to Constitution Hill, I saw on the other side of the road the president of the Geographical Society. I knew him slightly. I had read of the expedition; I was aware that he was organizing it. It came upon me in a flash, 'By George, here's my chance at last,' and I ran across the road and applied for the command."

Cynthia nodded her head.

"So that's how you became connected with the expedition—a pure piece of chance," she said slowly. "If you hadn't turned round that corner to Constitution Hill——"

"Oh, I should have dropped across something else, no doubt," said Rames.

"And now you are going into Parliament."

Cynthia was endeavoring to readjust her forecasts with the facts.

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"If I get elected," said Rames.

"Oh, you will get elected," replied Cynthia confidently, but there was no admiration in her confidence. It was almost disdainful. "They will call you 'Breezy Harry Rames,' and they will elect you by an immense majority."

"I am very glad you think that," Rames returned imperturbably; and he leaned forward with his elbow on his knees and spoke to her upon an altogether different note; so that the disdain died out of his face. He told her how in answer to Henry Smale's invitation he had gone down to Westminster in the afternoon, had sent in his card, had waited by the rails in the great round of St. George's Hall. Smale had come out from the House, and had fetched him down the stone passage with the painted walls into the lobby. A great man was speaking, and the lobby was nearly empty. But he finished his speech in a few moments, and the doors burst open and there was an eruption of members from the Chamber. Some stood in groups talking eagerly, others hurried to the libraries and the smoking-room, and barristers walked up and down in pairs, talking over their cases for the morrow. There was not a thing in that lobby, from the round clock above the doors of the House to the post-office and the whip's rooms which had not impressed itself vividly upon Rames's mind. Every now and then the doors would swing open as a member passed into the Chamber, and just for a moment Rames had a glimpse of the green benches, saw the great mace gleam upon the table, the books and the three clerks gowned and wigged behind it, and behind the clerks the dim figure of the speaker under the canopy of his chair.

Of what he saw in that afternoon Rames spoke with an enthusiasm and a modesty which quite took Cynthia by surprise. He saw dignity in every detail, was prepared to magnify with great meanings the simplest ceremony and form. He could not but impress her with his picture, so greatly impressed was he himself, so keenly had he longed to walk unchallenged down that forbidden way between the rails and to pass through the swing doors over the matting to his place on the green benches. People in the streets might sneer, or go about their business unconcerned. The cynics might talk of the Ins and Outs, and speak of Parliament as the most expensive game in which a race of players of games indulges, but there in that small room, with the soft light pouring down from the roof, and very often the morning light streaming in through the clerestory windows, the great decisions were ratified which might hamper or advance the future of forty millions.

Henry Smale had paced the lobby for half an hour with Rames, setting before him clearly the risks which he would run.

"I don't want to advise you one way or the other," said Smale, "but it is not as if you had no career, and you should come to your decision with your eyes open. I speak to you as to one of the ambitious. If you go in, I take it, you go in with an eye on the Treasury bench. Well, I can tell you this: the House of Commons makes a few, but it breaks a few, and if it advances some, it mars a good many. Poverty is a serious hindrance, for it means that you cannot give the time to the House of Commons which it now claims."

"There are the barristers," objected Rames.

"The House of Commons is in their line of business," returned Henry Smale. "The highest offices of the law are reached through the House of Commons. Moreover, the questions which arise for debate here have often been the subject already of suits in the law courts. Thus, the barristers come especially equipped. Yet, even so, very often they do not make their mark. And here is a point for you, Captain Rames." Henry Smale turned with a warning finger upraised and stopped in his walk. "The most distinguished men enter this House and never get the ear of it. The House of Commons is not ungenerous, but for eight hours a day through a long portion of the year people are talking in that Chamber there, and it will not provide an audience unless, first, the speaker has something of his own to contribute, and, secondly, can express his contribution. It does not ask for oratory; it is not content even with exhaustive knowledge; it demands character, personality, the power of coining out of your knowledge some judgments of your own, the power of explaining your judgment in clear and intelligible phrases sufficiently vivid to arrest its attention. I admit at once that if you succeed, success here is sweeter than anywhere else; its recog-

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nition is so immediate. But, on the other hand, here disappointment is more bitter. To come in with ambition, and to be left behind in the race—there is no destiny more galling."

"Yes," said Rames quietly, "I have thought over these things. There is that risk. I am prepared to take it."

"Very well," returned Smale, and once more he turned on the stone pavement, and with Rames at his side retraced his steps. "Let us suppose that you have got the ear of the House, that the benches fill up when you rise, and men stand at the bar to listen to you. Well, even so, you may lose your seat, and you may not yet have established yourself firmly enough to make your party find you another. There you are—out, your dreams dissolved, your ambitions stopped, yourself miserable, and your presence in this lobby an insignificance. Where you walked by right, you come as a guest; you have been, and you are not; you must turn to something else, while your thoughts are here, and very likely you are already too old to turn to something else."

"You put the worst side of it all in front of me, Mr. Smale."

"No," replied Mr. Smale. "Visit the political clubs a couple of months after a general election, talk to the defeated candidates who two months back were members, you will know I am talking the truth. The place enmeshes you. And mind, not because of the sensations. The sensations happily are rare. It is a humdrum assembly. I remember once taking a foreigner into the strangers' gallery at the time of a European crisis. An indiscreet letter had been sent. The foreigner was elated. He said to me, 'This will be very interesting. The Commons will discuss the letter which has so convulsed Europe.' But it was doing nothing of the kind. It was discussing whether the Tyne, Durham, and Hartlepool Railway paid its employees sufficiently well to justify Parliament in allowing it to build a bridge across a stream of which you have never heard."

Captain Rames smiled.

"I see a good many men in this lobby," he rejoined. "I do not notice that any of them are bored. Indeed, for the most part, they seem very busy."

"That is one of the tragedies of the House of Commons," Smale replied. "There are so many men in who during the whole of each session are extremely busy doing nothing; they haven't a moment to spare, they do nothing with so much energy and persistence. One moment they are in the library writing to a constituent who wants to know why the medal which his father earned in the Crimea has not yet arrived; the next moment they rush into the House because the famous Irishman with the witty tongue is up; they are off again to the outer lobby to tell a visitor that he can't see the Prime-Minister—'Industry without work, idleness without rest,' that is how this House was once described, and believe me the description is not inapt."

Thus said Henry Smale, but Harry Rames was not to be turned aside.

"I will take all these risks very willingly, Mr. Smale," he cried, "I want to be in here."

Henry Smale smiled, ceased from his arguments, and clapped Rames in a kindly fashion on the shoulder. "I have done my duty," he said. "Come!"

He led Rames through a little doorway at the side of which sat three or four messengers, and at the end of a narrow passage tapped upon a door.

"Come in," said a voice, and as Smale ushered in Harry Rames a man of pleasant adress and an exquisite suit of clothes arose and welcomed them.

"Hanley," said Henry Smale, "this is Captain Rames."

Mr. Hanley shook hands cordially with Rames and invited him to a chair.

"We shall be very glad to have you in the House," he said. He beamed. He seemed to have been waiting for Captain Rames to complete his happiness. "I think Ludsey was suggested."

"Benoliel suggested it," said Smale. "He's a good judge too."

"There is no candidate arranged yet. I will write to Ludsey at once."

Smale and Rames left the room together.

"I should think you might consider that settled," said Smale.

Rames thanked him and referred to Hanley's charm of manner. Smale's small eyes twinkled.

"That's why he sits in that room. He's the chief Whip. Otherwise he is an ass," and shaking hands with Rames Mr. Smale abruptly returned to the House.

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The gist of the conversation with Smale Rames told to Cynthia in the reception-room at the admiralty, and she listened with a growing interest. Then once more his note changed. He spoke with a boyish enthusiasm of his aims. To force an entrance into that arena; the entrance gained, to fight himself into the station of a great man; ultimately to govern and exercise authority—the note of personal ambition rose to a pitch of exultation in his voice. Of principles he obviously had no care, theories of politics were to him of no account. He was the political adventurer pure and simple. Cynthia sat with her eyes of dark-blue clouded, and a real disappointment at her heart. She raised her face to his, and a little smile trembled upon her lips, and even her voice shook ever so slightly.

"You have been very honest to me about it all," she said. "I thank you for that."

Captain Rames was a trifle bewildered. He could not see that he had anything to conceal.

"Good-night," she said as she rose, "I see my friend Mrs. Royle waiting for me."

She gave him her hand and moved away for a few steps and then stopped. Harry Rames was at her side before she had stopped. She turned to him timidly with the blood mounting very prettily into her cheeks.

"I suppose," she said, "that your journey to the South really counts now for very little in your thoughts. Yet you must have had a great many wishes for your success sent to you from all parts of the world before you started. I wonder you can forget them all, and leave that work unfinished."

It seemed to Captain Rames that she had hit upon a rather far-fetched argument to persuade him to a second journey to the South.

"Well, I am getting a good many wishes for my success now, and I hear them spoken," he said with a smile. "It is true that I got all sorts of messages and telegrams before I sailed to the South. But to tell you the truth I was rather too busy to read them. I have got them all tied up somewhere in a brown-paper parcel."

Cynthia seemed actually to flinch. She turned away abruptly.

"I wanted to ask of you a favor," said Rames. "Mr. Benoliel said that you lived near Ludsey. You could do a great deal if you would help me. Will you?"

Cynthia turned back to him, her eyes shone angrily, the blood came into her cheeks in a rush.

"No," she said decisively, and without another word she walked away.

"I might have struck her," thought Captain Rames. He knew nothing of a telegram from the Daventry estancia which lay forgotten in that brown-paper parcel.

None the less he walked home across St. James's Park treading upon air. Great people had moved out of their way to make his acquaintance; Cabinet ministers had promised to speak for him; important ladies had smiled their friendliest. He looked back upon the days of his insignificance, and his heart was buoyant within him. Certainly one girl with dark-blue eyes and a face like a rose-leaf had presumed to disapprove of him. But there! Girls! You never knew what odd notions nested in their pretty heads. If a man on the make steered his course by a girl's favor, he would soon shipwreck on a snag. However, this girl must be soothed down. Harry Rames could not afford to have an enemy at Ludsey. But he had no doubt that he could soothe her down. He walked home, softly whistling under his breath.

Cynthia for her part went home in a different mood. She had lost another illusion to-night.

(To be continued.)

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THE POINT OF VIEW

The Puritan Child

WE owe it largely to Judge Sewall and Jonathan Edwards, that Puritan children have acquired such a bad reputation for priggishness, morbidness, and dolefulness. Thanks to these worthies, all the odd little boys and girls in skin-tight nankeens and box-pleated brocades, whose wooden portraits have come down to us, figure in our imagination as a set of insufferable young theologians. Who ever conceives of the little Puritans as romping, noisy, venturesome, quarrelsome, or (*sotto voce*) spoiled? Yet any one may read for himself how the Custis children were indulged with rich clothing from over-sea, and how bread-and-butter misses were allowed to take seven to twelve silk dresses to boarding-school. Any one may read those fond, affectionate letters addressing absent children as "My Indear'd Son," "My deare little Daughter," which Mrs. Earle and Mrs. Anne Wharton have preserved to us. Any one who is inured to the pharmacopœia of our forefathers may see at first-hand how tenderly ailing children were dosed with those frightful concoctions of dried spiders, stewed vipers, and melted angleworms, which were then thought so efficacious; how pathetically parents tried, with spices and sugar, to make them palatable: and when, in spite of all, their darlings died, what wistful inscriptions were carved on little tombstones, with broken rosebuds, little lambs, and doves.

And indeed I think there was a good deal for modern children to envy in the lot of the Puritan child. There was plenty of romance and adventure in the virgin woods all round his home. Their depths were full of wolves, catamounts, and redmen. Children had all the romance of savage neighbors, with little or none of the shuddering fear that haunted their elders. "Father," of course, would take care of them. Within the range of "father's gun" Massasoit and Thayendanegea would fear to be seen. In place of the fairies, brownies, and sookas that made romance for his little English, Scotch, or Irish cousin, the colonial child had small dusky contemporaries miraculously learned in wood-lore, and living in strange houses, dressed in beaded skins, and "fed with curious meat." Tumbling little rivers swarmed with fish that could be caught in the hand, and the embossed and iridiscent wild turkey walked out of the woods in autumn with its gawky troop of young ones behind it, like an edible bird of Paradise.

It is safe to conclude that Puritan children were seldom lonely. They had, if anything, an embarrassment of playmates. Where families of a baker's dozen were usual, we may figure to ourselves the harvest of cousins! An only child's ideal of a large family is one "large enough to dance the lanciers." But these Puritan families were large enough to dance the farandole! That they never did so was, perhaps, for the same reason that Bostonians never visit Bunker Hill; because they always can. Among these swarming hives a boy might have a special crony among his brothers, or a little girl a "bosom sister." Their tasks were vastly lightened by companionship: Polly and Molly stringing the apples together, while Jimmy and Timothy husked the corn. In the event of visitors at a Puritan house, we may be sure the children were in an excited and hilarious state of mind. Much of the provisioning devolved on the little berry pickers and egg hunters.

"There was racing and chasing on Cannobie lea." When visitors came it was for more than a week-end. They had experienced many adventures and perils to come at all; stage-coaches had been mired, and they had been obliged to descend into the mud and tug and push to start them; inns had been crowded or cold, luggage had been rained on, Indians had, perhaps, attacked them.

"They stayed not for brake and they stopped not for stone:
They swam the Esk River where ford there was none."

Arrived safe after all these hardships, they were in no hurry to be off again. Jane Austen's heroines spent two or three months at the houses of comparatively new acquaintances; and indeed I think they would never have gone home at all but for some friend opportunely going the same way and offering to escort them. Three volumes of "Sir Charles Grandison" transpire during Harriet's visit to her "cousin Reeveses." What Puritan child could be of a

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sad countenance with ten or fifteen little cousins coming to spend the winter? How they were all stowed away in such modest houses we can only guess from the immensity of the old fashioned "tester bed." Perhaps, like the gentlemen in "Tomlinson," they were

"Sleeping three on a grid."

Attics, however, were excellent dormitories, and could be divided by hanging quilts into a multitude of sleeping-boxes open at the top to the midnight breezes sweet with locust, lilac, and apple blossom.

Sundays, it is true, were a seamy side in the free and exciting life of colonial children. The Puritan Sabbath may have been made for man, but it was certainly not made for boys and girls. They did not always endure it with meekness either. The most entertaining chapter of Mr. William Root Bliss's inimitable book, "Side Glimpses of the Colonial Meeting House," is that devoted to the "Wretched Boys." From the researches of Mr. Bliss it would seem that the desperate efforts of town and church authorities were all in vain to secure seemly behavior among the back benches relegated to the boys of the parish. Duxbury chose a special committee to curb "their disorder and rudeness in time of the worship of God." The deacons of Farmington were requested to "appoint persons who shall sit convenient to inspect the youth in the meeting-house on days of public worship and keep them in order." John Pike of Dedham was paid sixteen shillings in 1723 for "keeping the boys in subjection six months"; but when he was hired a second time, as Mr. Bliss shrewdly remarks, *he doubled his price*. In a Cape Cod town one John King was unable alone to cope with the boys, and four men were added by town appointment to assist him to chastise them if found "playing and prophaning the Sabbath day." Parents were very long-suffering if they allowed town authorities to punish their sons. Or was Young America too much for his parents? It would seem that herding the boys together on the back benches invited the "Rude and Idel Behavior" which a Connecticut justice of the peace itemized in his note-book as follows:

"Smiling and Larfing and Intiseing others to the same Evil:

". . . Pulling the hair of his nayber Veroni Simkins in the time of publick worship. . . .

"Throwing Sister penticost perkins on the Ice on the Saboth day between the meeting hows and his place of abode."

The indignant selectmen, justices, and deacons who recorded these misdemeanors little thought what a comfort they would prove to those of us who have previously conceived of the Puritan boys as "too good to be wholesome." It takes a load of unavailing pity off our hearts, similar to the relief of finding that Fox was a little too zealous in describing the torments of the martyrs.

Another cheering sidelight on the strictness of our forefathers is the orthodox but convivial ordination ball of Connecticut. Dancing was, in fact, not so severely interdicted in Puritan days as a few generations later. Mrs. Earle has a list of picturesque and fascinating names for dances, such as the "Innocent Maid," "Blue Bonnets," and the "Orange Tree." Such ingenuity and variety of dances seem to prove that the most delightful of sports was not very uncommon. Children in Vermont schools three generations ago still amused themselves with "reels of four" and "reels of eight." Raisings, husking, parings, and, above all, quiltings, were shining instances of the Puritanic love of a "high old time" even when assembled together ostensibly for work. But I think the singing-school was the merriest of all the merry old-time parties. What a come-down it would be for a Puritan big boy or girl, to exchange the mirth and jollity of one of their "sings" for one of our afternoon teas, for example! I should like to have heard such a gathering in our valley sing the so-called "Ode on Science," with its resounding patriotism and glorious martial air. To be sure there is nothing about science in it except the assertion that:

"She visits fair Americay [so pronounced to rhyme]
And sets her sons among the stars!"

I should like to have seen some Puritan damsel advance to sing the "Worldly Song," while some bashful big boy held his candle over her book, and smiled at her tuneful warning:

"Of all false young men to beware!"

Girls were probably more proficient at music than their brothers: they should have been so, when the principal branches taught them were music, embroidery, and "the globes." "I learn," wrote Eliza Southgate Bowne, with the proud consciousness of a complete education, "embroidery and geography." One supposedly self-respecting town in Connecticut voted that none of its money should be "wasted" in educating girls. Of an old seminary in our town it is still said that its troubles

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began when, and have never ceased since, girls were admitted. Learning, however, like love, laughs at locksmiths. Mrs. Earle tells of a little girl who sat on the school-house steps for hours every day to overhear what she could of the lessons of the boys inside. Instances of highly educated women are not infrequent in old memoirs; and certainly many of our ancestresses wrote letters in a charming, playful, unaffected style—the unforced fruit of good reading.

After all, the girls missed very little by not going to school. When a schoolmaster was expected to perform the duties of sexton and grave-digger, as well as to help the minister out with his parochial calls, and even to help the surgeon (and all for a diminutive salary), he could scarcely be expected to prepare very thoroughly for college. His greatest accomplishment—nay, his most solid branch—was an elaborate and ornamental handwriting. This he was expected to vary at will from "Saxon," "Gothic," and "old MS" to "chancery, Engrossing, Running Court, and Lettre Frisée." The smallest children wore hornbooks round their necks, sometimes calling them "horngigs," "absey-books," and "battledore books." These paper alphabets, protected by a thin sheet of horn, have perished from the face of the earth. But three, I think, are known to be in existence. From the hornbook they advanced to the New England primer, "Reading-madeasy," and the horrible arithmetics which they made (I suppose) "a shy" at understanding. But this their master himself could hardly have done. If we, in our luxurious childhood, tenderly lured through Greenleaf by pictures of apples, etc., found fractions hard, what would have been our situation confronted with the "Rule of Falsehood," "Redeeming of Pawnes and Geames," the "Backer Rule of Thirds," and "Tare and Trett." One term familiar to us, such as "the quotient," was then surrounded by a score of others now obsolete, such as "the Cloff," "the Suttle," and "the Neat." Happy little Puritan girls whose town fathers would waste no money on their education! Happy little boys who were kept at home to help on the farm! The schools were heated by a communal wood supply, each voter drawing a load to the school-house. If a father were delinquent in this respect, his children suffered for it; the seats farthest from the fire being assigned to them. And yet I think the irrepressible boys who "larfed and smiled" in a Puritan meeting-house could withstand the hardships of the Puritan school. No doubt they found means, then as now, to sweeten and diversify the pursuit of learning; and when the school-master came to board his week at their house, they were dull boys indeed if they did not manage to treat him in his turn to a system of rewards and punishments. At all events, they carried on their "nature study" in a way never to be equalled by our most approved methods. They became learned entomologists, herbalists, and ornithologists without book or teacher. The Puritan child needed no instruction in the great art of observing. He had an Audubonic knowledge of the gopher, field-mouse, woodchuck, muskrat, chipmunk, and bull-frog, "creatures more humorous than any in Collot." It is true, there were no kindergartens, and in this respect the Puritan children well deserve our pity. Poor substitute, for their tender years, was the severe school-master, with birch and dunce-cap, for those gentle maidens, votaresses of St. Froebel, who now entice their happiest descendants into caterpillar and butterfly games, and charming little pantomimic songs!

His School

Perhaps, on the whole, it was fortunate that the Colonial schools were sparse and ill attended. The Colonial home was well able to fill their place with an excellent course in manual training. Childish industries were varied, interesting, and important. The Puritan child had the satisfaction of knowing that the household could get along but ill without him. Seeding raisins and "going to the store" were not *then* his chief employments respectively within doors and without. Besides driving the cows to and from pasture, the children hunted oak galls, spruce gum, and partridge eggs in the forest, hetchelled and carded wool, strung onions, apples, and corn for drying, dipped candles, "tried out" lard, tended the calves and hens, mended and spun, and caught the geese to be picked for pillows:

> Rising up early,
> Weeding the cabbages,
> Going forth berrying
> In the dim woodland;
> Piling the hay, and
> Picking up apples,
> Or heaping the pumpkins
> High in the bin:—
> . . . Thus their week-days.

Whittling occupied a good eminence. The hereditary art of boys was a fine and valued

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one. They could make door-handles, pegs, spouts for maple sap, wooden spoons, and even the somewhat clumsy brooms used in that day. Tom Sawyer's aunt's fence, which had to be painted with such exceeding care, was paralleled every morning in the busy Puritan house, and many a boy and girl, we may be sure, "felt nationly" when the all-important task was deftly and cleverly done.

When, perhaps late in the afternoon, they ran out to play, their favorite games were probably the same as ours—oats peas beans, green gravel, Sally Waters, hide-and-seek, kitty in the corner, cross-tag, squat-tag, and hop-scotch. These games, we are told, derive from a remote antiquity. English children played them in their primrose fields when Crecy and Agincourt were yet to be fought. More modern is the pretty pageant "King William"—which, however, is strictly not a Puritan game at all. It seems to have taken root and flourished only where the Church of England was established. Thus in the old Episcopalian town of Arlington, Vt., it is still played by children in the town hall at Christmas parties, while it seems unknown in the other (Congregational) towns of Bennington County. The date of "King William" is easy to fix, for the opening rhymes plainly relate to the "glorious Revolution" of 1688:

His Play

> "King William was king James's son:
> Upon a royal race he run;
> Upon his breast he wore a star
> To point the way to London Bar."

Puritan boys played a great variety of games of ball. Trap-ball, fives, and other poor apologies for the national game were in vogue among them, and foot-ball appears to have been popular, especially in winter; when, according to the traveller Misson, it was played in the streets. Misson seems, however, to have been but little impressed with it. He writes as follows:

"It is kicked about from one to tother in the streets by him that can get it, and that is all the art of it."

Little girls lavished their affections on very clumsy and shapeless dolls, which perhaps roused all the more their imaginative motherhood. What were called "French dolls" were apparently the lankiest and most awkward of all: a parody on the Gallic name. The beds, chairs, and carriages made for these poor creatures, however, were often as beautiful and perfectly made as the full-sized models which we now hunt with undiminished ardor from farmhouse to farmhouse. Rag dolls cannot have been quite unknown, but rags were too precious to be used commonly for playthings. Very rich little girls perhaps had a rag doll or two in their nurseries.

The manners of the Puritan child were a little too formal and a little too meek. How could fathers and mothers ever endure being addressed as "esteemed parent," or "honored sir and madam"? A pert child must have been a great curiosity in Massachusetts Bay. Such a one was generally thought to be delirious or bewitched. No Puritan child in its senses was rude to its elders. When Ann Putnam, for example, spoke out boldly and saucily in meeting, she was supposed to be having a fit. I confess that I think there was a charm in the somewhat stiff manners of the little Puritans. Their bobbing courtesy has returned, and is the height of fashion in the metropolis. Why not, then, the more dignified "retiring courtesy" and the "cheese" as well? Delightful as is the free prattle of modern children, occasional "flashes of silence" would not come in amiss. The picture which Miss Repplier draws of the repressed and over-governed Wesleys and Martineaus seems far too dismal to be generally true. Certainly "Snowbound" paints the life of a Puritan farmer's boy in very glowing colors. May we not, I wonder, comfort ourselves with the belief that children were children still, even under the theocracy, and that parents then as ever had much ado to keep from spoiling them? Eloquent of the Puritan parental heart is that brief entry left by one of them:

"Fifty years ago to-day died my little John, Alas!"

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THE FIELD OF ART

THE AMERICAN SCHOOL OF PAINTING

IN the catalogues of our museums you may find entries like this: "John Smith, American school; The Empty Jug" or what not. In such entries little more than a bare statement of nationality is intended. John Smith is an American, by birth or adoption; that is all that the statement is meant to convey. But the question occurs: have we an American school in a more specific sense than this? Have we a body of painters with certain traits in common and certain differences from the painters of other countries? Has our production in painting sufficient homogeneity and sufficient national and local accent to entitle it to the name of American school in the sense in which there is, undoubtedly, a French school and an English school?

Under the conditions of to-day there are no longer anywhere such distinctive local schools as existed in the Renaissance. In Italy, in those days, there were not only such great schools as the Venetian, the Florentine, and the Umbrian, differing widely in their point of view, their manner of seeing, and their technical traditions—each little town had a school with something characteristic that separated its painters from those of other schools in the surrounding towns. To-day every one knows and is influenced by the work of every one else, and it is only broad national characteristics that still subsist. Modern pictures are singularly alike, but, on the whole, it is still possible to tell an English picture from a French one, and a German or Italian picture from either. We may still speak of a Dutch school or a Spanish school with some reasonableness. Is it similarly and equally reasonable to speak of an American school? Does a room full of American pictures have a different look from a room full of pictures by artists of any other nationality? Does one feel that the pictures in such a room have a something in common that makes them kin, and a something different that distinguishes them from the pictures of all other countries? I think the answer must be in the affirmative.

We have already passed the stage of mere apprenticeship, and it can no longer be said that our American painters are mere reflections of their European masters. Twenty, or even ten, years ago there may have been some truth in the accusation. To-day many of our younger painters have had no foreign training at all, or have had such as has left no specific mark of a particular master; and from the work of most of our older painters it would be difficult to guess who their masters were without reference to a catalogue. They have, through long work in America and under American conditions, developed styles of their own bearing no discoverable resemblance to the styles of their first instructors. To take specific examples, who would imagine from the mural paintings of Blashfield or the decorations by Mowbray in the University Club of New York that either had been a pupil of Bonnat? Or who, looking at the exquisite landscapes or delicate figure pieces of Weir, would find anything to recall the name of Gérôme? Some of the pupils of Carolus Duran are almost the only painters we have who acquired in their school-days a distinctive method of work which still marks their production, and even they are hardly distinguishable to-day from others; for the method of Duran, as modified and exemplified by John Sargent, has become the method of all the world, and a pupil of Carolus simply paints in the modern manner, like the rest. Those American painters who have adopted the impressionist point of view, again, have modified its technic to suit their own purposes, and are at least as different from the impressionists of France as are the impressionists of Scandinavia. We have painters who are undeniably influenced by Whistler, but so have other countries—the school of Whistler is international—and, after all, Whistler was an American. In short, the resemblances between American painting to-day and the painting of other countries are no greater than the resemblances between the painting of any two of those countries. And I think the differences between American painting and that of other countries are quite as great as, if not greater than, the differences between the paintings of any two of those countries.

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Another accusation that used to be heard against our painters has been outlived. We used to be told, with some truth, that we had learned to paint but had nothing to say with our painting; that we produced admirable studies but no pictures. The accusation never was true of our landscape painting. Whatever may be the final estimation of the works of Inness and Wyant, there can be no doubt that they produced pictures—things conceived and worked out to give one definite and complete impression; things in which what was presented and what was eliminated were equally determined by a definite purpose; things in which accident and the immediate dominance of nature had little or no part. As for Winslow Homer, whether in landscape or figure painting, his work was unfailingly pictorial, whatever else it might be. He was a great and original designer, and every canvas of his was completely and definitely composed —a quality which at once removes from the category of mere sketches and studies even his slighter and more rapid productions. And our landscape painters of to-day are equally painters of pictures. Some of them might be thought, by a modern taste, too conventionally painters of pictures—too much occupied with composition and tone and other pictorial qualities at the expense of freshness of observation —while our briskest and most original observers have, many of them, a power of design and a manner of casting even their freshest observations into pictorial form that is as admirable as it is remarkable.

No one could enter one of our exhibitions without feeling the definitely pictorial quality of American landscape painting, but these exhibitions do less justice to the achievement of our figure painters. The principal reason for this is that many of our most serious figure painters have been so much occupied with mural decoration that their work seldom appears in the exhibitions at all, while the work that they have done is so scattered over our vast country that we rather forget its existence and, assuredly, have little realization of its amount. It is one of the defects of our exhibition system that work of this kind, while it is, of course, on permanent exhibition in the place for which it is painted, is hardly ever "exhibited," in the ordinary sense, in the centres where it is produced. The regular visitor to the Paris salons might know almost all that has been done in France in the way of mural painting. The public of our American exhibitions knows only vaguely and by hearsay what our mural painters have done and are doing. It is true that such work is infinitely better seen in place, but it is a pity it cannot be seen, even imperfectly, by the people who attend our exhibitions—people who can rarely have the necessary knowledge to read such collections of sketches, studies, and photographs as are shown at the exhibitions of the Architectural League where, alone, our mural painters can show anything. If it were seen it would surely alter the estimation in which American figure painting is held. Such work as was done by the late John La Farge, such work as is being done by Blashfield and Mowbray and Simmons and a dozen others, if not, in the most limited sense of the word, pictorial, is even further removed from the mere sketch or study—the mere bit of good painting—than is the finest easel picture.

But it is not only in mural decoration that serious figure painting is being done in this country. I do not see how any one can deny the name of pictures to the genre paintings of Mr. Tarbell and Mr. Paxton unless he is prepared to deny pictorial quality to the whole Dutch school of the seventeenth century; and the example of these men is influencing a number of others toward the production of thoroughly thought out and executed genre pictures. We have long had such serious figure painters as Thayer and Brush, Dewing and Weir. The late Louis Loeb was attempting figure subjects of a very elaborate sort. To-day every exhibition shows an increasing number of worthy efforts at figure painting in either the naturalistic or the ideal vein. We have pictures with subjects intelligently chosen and intelligibly treated, pictures with a pattern and a clear arrangement of line and mass, pictures soundly drawn and harmoniously colored as well as admirably painted.

The painters of America are no longer followers of foreign masters or students learning technique and indifferent to anything else. They are a school, producing work differing in character from that of other schools and at least equal in quality to that of any school existing to-day.

If so much may be taken as proved, the question remains for consideration: what are the characteristics of the American School of Painting? Its most striking characteristic is one that may be considered a fault or a virtue according to the point of view and the prepossessions of the observer. It is a characteristic

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that has certainly been a cause of the relatively small success of American work at recent international exhibitions. The American school is, among the schools of to-day, singularly old-fashioned. This characteristic has, undoubtedly, puzzled and repelled the foreigner. It is a time when the madness for novelty seems to be carrying everything before it, when anything may be accepted so long as it is or seems new, when the effort of all artists is to get rid of conventions and to shake off the "shackles of tradition." Here is a new people in the blessed state of having no traditions to shake off, and from whom, therefore, some peppery wildness might be expected for the tickling of jaded palates. Behold, they are sturdily setting themselves to recover for art the things the others have thrown away! They are trying to revive the old fashion of thoughtful composition, the old fashion of good drawing, the old fashion of lovely color, and the old fashion of sound and beautiful workmanship.

This conservatism of American painting, however, is not of the kind that still marks so much of the painting of England. Excepting exceptions, English painting is somewhat stolidly staying where it was. America's conservatism is ardent, determined, living. It is not standing still; it is going somewhere as rapidly as possible—it might, perhaps, be more truly called, not conservatism, but reaction. We have, of course, our ultra-modernists, but their audacities are mild compared to those of the French or German models they imitate. We have, even more of course, the followers of the easiest way—the practitioners of current and accepted methods who are alike everywhere. But our most original and most distinguished painters, those who give the tone to our exhibitions and the national accent to our school, are almost all engaged in trying to get back one or another of the qualities that marked the great art of the past. They have gone back of the art of the day and are retying the knots that should bind together the art of all ages.

This tendency shows itself strongly even in those whose work seems, at first sight, most purely naturalistic or impressionistic. Among those of our painters who have adopted and retained the impressionist technique, with its hatching of broken colors, the two most notable are Mr. Hassam and Mr. Weir. But Mr. Hassam is a designer with a sense of balance and of classic grace almost equal to that of Corot, and he uses the impressionist method to express otherwise the shimmer of delicate foliage that Corot loved. Nay, so little is he a pure naturalist, he cannot resist letting the white sides of naked nymphs gleam among his tree trunks—he cannot refrain from the artist's immemorial dream of Arcady. As for Mr. Weir, surely nothing could be more unlike the instantaneousness of true impressionism than his long-brooded-over, subtle-toned, infinitely sensitive art.

There is little dreaminess in the work of Mr. Tarbell and the growing number of his followers. Theirs is almost a pure naturalism, a "making it like." Yet, notably in the work of Mr. Tarbell himself, and to some extent in that of the others, there is an elegance of arrangement, a thoroughness in the notation of gradations of light, a beauty and a charm that were learned of no modern. Their art is an effort to bring back the artistic quality of the most artistic naturalism ever practised, that of Vermeer of Delft.

Others of our artists are going still further back in the history of art for a part of their inspiration. Mr. Brush has always been a linealist and a student of form, but his earlier canvases, admirable as they were, were those of a docile pupil of Gérôme applying the thoroughness of Gérôme's method to a new range of subjects, and painting the American Indian as Gérôme had painted the modern Egyptian. In recent years each new picture of his has shown more clearly the influence of the early Italians—each has been more nearly a symphony of pure line.

Even in purely technical matters our painters have been experimenting backward, trying to recover lost technical beauties. The last pictures of Louis Loeb were under-painted throughout in monochrome, the final colors being applied in glazes and rubbings, and to-day a number of others, landscape and figure painters, are attempting to restore and master this, the pure Venetian method; while still others, among them Emil Carlsen, are reviving the use of tempera.

But it is in our mural painting even more than elsewhere that the conservative or reactionary tendency of American painting is most clearly marked. John La Farge was always himself, but when the general movement in mural painting began in this country with the Chicago World's Fair and the subsequent decoration of the Library of Congress, the rest of us were much under the influence of Puvis de Chavannes. Even then the design

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was not his, but was founded on earlier examples of decorative composition, but his pale tones were everywhere. Little by little the study of the past has taught us better. American mural painting has grown steadily more monumental in design, and at the same time it has grown richer and fuller in color. To-day, while it is not less but more personal and original than it was, it has more kinship with the noble achievements of Raphael and Veronese than has any other modern work extant.

And this brings us to the second characteristic of the American School of Painting; it is rapidly becoming a school of color. We have still plenty of painters who work in the blackish or chalky or muddy and opaque tones of modern art, but I think we have more men who produce rich and powerful color and more men who produce subtle and delicate color than any other modern school. The experiments in reviving old technical methods have been undertaken for the sake of purity and luminosity of color, and have largely succeeded. The pictures of Mr. Tarbell are far more colored than those of the European painter whose work is, in some ways, most analogous to his, M. Joseph Bail. Mr. Hassam's color is always sparkling and brilliant, Mr. Dewing's delicate and charming, Mr. Weir's subtle and harmonious and sometimes very full. Even Mr. Brush's linear arrangements are clothed in sombre but often richly harmonious tones, and the decorative use of powerful color is the main reliance of such painters as Hugo Ballin. But the note of color runs through the school and one hardly needs to name individual men. Whether our landscapists glaze and scumble with the tonalists, or use some modification of the impressionist hatching, it is for the sake of color; and even our most forthright and dashing wielders of the big brush often achieve a surprising power of resonant coloring.

Power, fulness, and beauty of coloring are hardly modern qualities. Much as impressionism has been praised for restoring color to a colorless art, its result has been, too often, to substitute whitishness for blackishness. Color has characterized no modern painting since that of Delacroix and Millet as it characterizes much of the best American painting. The love for and the success in color of our school is, after all, a part of its conservatism.

It may seem an odd way of praising a modern school to call it the least modern of any. It *would* be an odd way of praising that school if its lack of modernness were a mere matter of lagging behind or of standing still and marking time. But if the "march of progress" has been downhill—if the path that is trod leads into a swamp or over a precipice—then there may be most hopefulness for those who can 'bout-face and march the other way. I have, in recent articles in this magazine, given at some length some of my reasons for thinking that modern art has been following a false route and is in danger of perishing in the bog or falling over the cliff. If it is so we may congratulate ourselves that those of our painters who are still following the rest of the world have not so nearly reached the end of the road, and that those who are more independent have discovered in time what that end is and have turned back.

It is because it is least that of to-day that I believe our art may be that of to-morrow—it is because it is, of all art now going, that which has most connection with the past that I hope the art of America may prove to be the art of the future.

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